TAKE ONE

The Canadian Film Magazine

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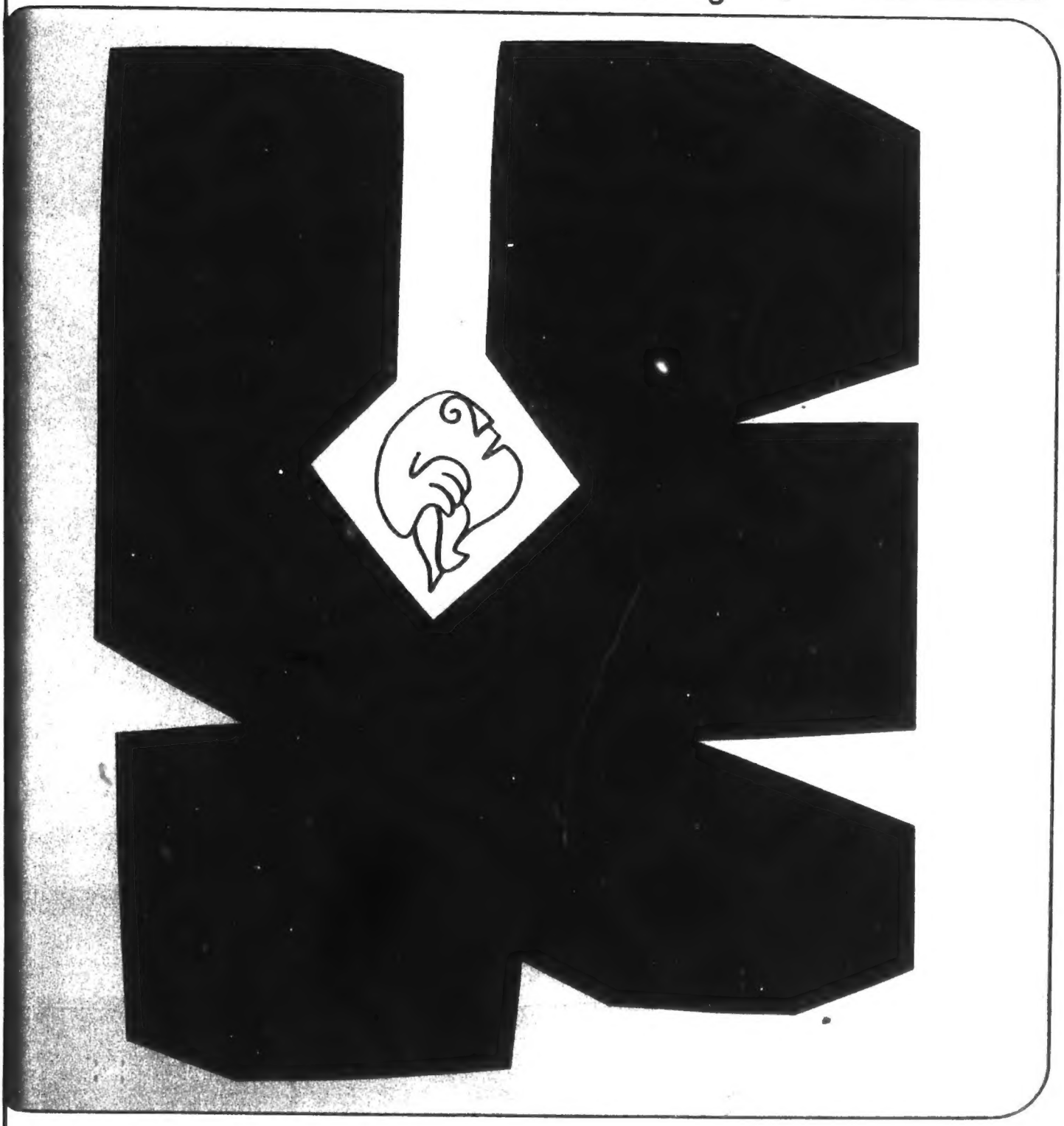

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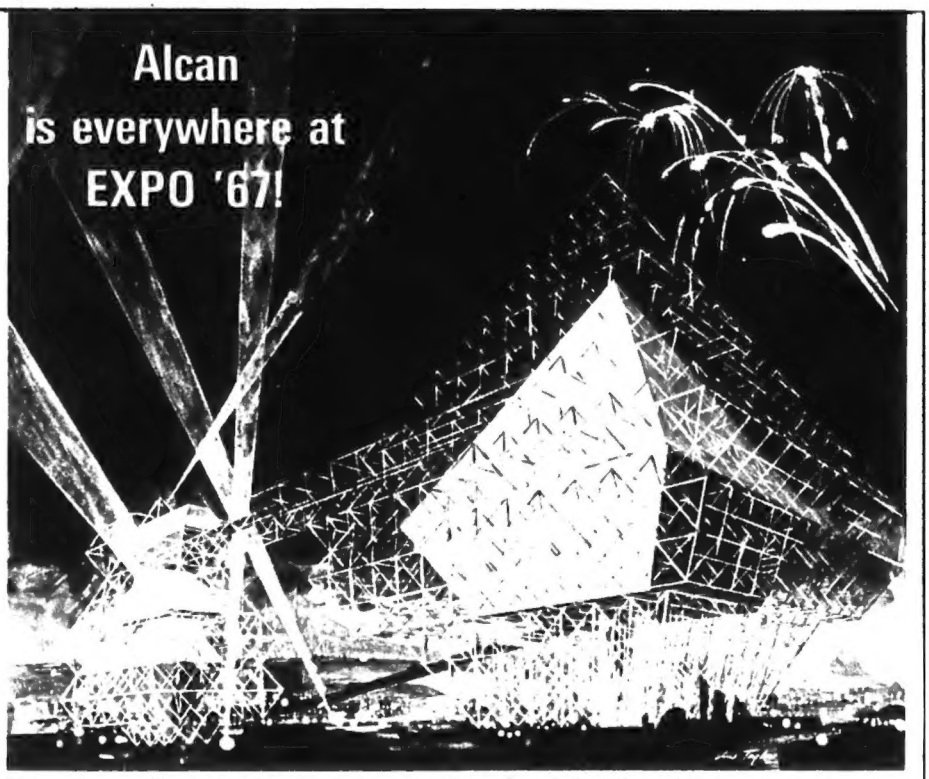

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TAKE ONE

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the TRIUMPHS & TRIALS of LARRY KENT

I would never show a film in Canada. Certainly not until it got reviewed elsewhere.

You mean you would have it reviewed in Europe or New York?

In the States, anywhere — but not in Canada. I'd never open or break a film in Canada — there's no chance. I mean, the Canadian critics are so sure of their inferiority in every way, and they act in a very patronizing and snide way to any kind of art.

Why?

I don't know. It's a fact. Except for Gerald Pratley and Robert Russel, who are genuine and honest critics, I have yet to see a critic in Canada who is not patronizing to the film maker. He acts as if he is totally superior and as if Canada couldn't produce anything worthwhile anyway.

Why?

I don't know, I don't know. I couldn't answer it.

Do you think it is that the critics haven't developed?

Yes. The point is that the critics are trying to say to us you have to be tops in the world, which is reasonable enough, and they are not even third-rate; they are hundredth-raters. Every one of them from Wendy Michener down would love to work in the States, like for the Tribune or the New York Times, or have the position of Phyllis Powell in London. I mean, their articles are not good enough to be accepted in Sight & Sound, or any of the top magazines which are free-lance. They are third-rate writers. Third-rate? They are tenth-rate. And yet they consider — they have to, I guess, for their own ego — that they are tops.

Now, if we don't have first-rate critics, maybe we don't have first-rate film makers.

No, that's not true. You know one has nothing to do with the other. Remember, what we don't have is money. I mean this sincerely. But for the little film we've done, we've done very well. I've only got to quote my reviews for **Sweet Substitute** (**Caressed**). In the States, it got really great reviews from the Herald Tribune, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and San Francisco Examiner, and from the Manchester Guardian. I only got knocked by the Vancouver Sun and Wendy Michener in Macleans and others. And then, after having written these reviews, each of these critics has acted as if he had given you a great review and said, "I knew you were tremendous." Wendy Michener acts now as if she liked **Sweet Substitute** and gave it a great review when, in fact, she knocked it for being just another teenage film and she disliked it at the time.

Starting back at the beginning — something about you — first, you've been in the business how long?

Well, I was the originator. I was the first guy in Canada, the first, and probably in the world (we don't know too much about it), but certainly one of the first to make a feature film at a university.

How did you get the money for that?

Well, I worked and my wife worked, and we made **Bitter Ash** for $5000.

Did you make any money on it?

We made about $5500.

So you made a profit of $500?

Maybe a little more. But this is the film that David Secter saw and sort of grabbed, and now David is screaming that he's the first one to have done it, with his first film **(Winter Kept Us Warm)**, which is quite amusing because then I made **Sweet Substitute** also at the university. Before he had even made his first film, I had made two student films.

How much did it cost to make Sweet Substitute?

It was $15,000.

Did you make any money on that?

Yeah — well it's running, it's doing very well in the States. Right now it's run at first-rate art theatres throughout the U.S. I think it's run in about 600 or 700 theatres — maybe a thousand before we finish.

Film-maker Kent was interviewed for Take One by Richard Notkin.

You haven't cleared $15,000 yet, I'm sure.

Oh yeah, we've cleared and more. I mean, we're ready to put money in my next film.

Already?

Oh, it's making money — it's making good money.

You've been at the Film Board, now, for some months. Is there anything you are learning that you hadn't expected?

Well, I haven't been there long enough to know, but, I think I'm learning what you'd call the professional Hollywood way because, as you know, the Board is very professional — first-rate of course. But I realize one thing: that it's very difficult to learn at the Board, say, how to make a film in a short period. It takes quite a long while, and I think you are inclined to be influenced too much by the people. I think, you know, that film-making should be personal. I think film-making is your own influence and style. It's like writing. I think there's a whole change come about in film-making. This is my personal opinion. I come from the theatre, but (this is a funny thing) I think I'm very much against the theatrical director in films. That's the guy who takes someone else's script and reinterprets it. He discusses it with the actors, helps them, blocks it, discusses the visuals with the cameraman, and will have it blocked as the writer has written. It will be very mechanical, even in the editing. It might be a very worthwhile film, but this sort of film is very different to what I think is happening or should happen. I think we are doing a very different kind of thing.

What are some examples of free, personal, non-theatrical films?

8 1/2, La Dolce Vita, 400 Blows. These are very successful. I think the most successful films are by film authors — which is a trite term, but closest to what I mean — the guy who goes out to make a film about something he's interested in. It doesn't mean that he doesn't use writers, but the idea, concept and everything are his. That means that he doesn't go to a novel or some other property to get ideas.

Are you going to make films here?

I don't know. I would like to — times change, but as far as I feel now, the hell with Canada as far as anything is concerned. Because, in the first place, you can't get distribution and, I mean, why deal with the people you have to deal with. You know, you might as well go directly to the States or Europe. In other words, if you are making a film — not a Canadian film, because that's absolutely ridiculous — you get no help at all from Canada **in any respect,** so anything you do here is just to have a location that happens to be convenient. I'd never open here.

Is it more practical in terms of money?

No, but I don't know anybody in New York or California, so I make them here. It's just convenience. The States would be a whole new situation. I know certain people but . . .

Can you survive, making films?

Well, we don't know, you see. We'll see, I may have to go. I know I don't care any more whether I have to or not.

Could you survive in the U.S.?

Right at the moment? No.

Would you have to work for a company?

Well, I have to right now — I'm working for the National Film Board of Canada. You certainly can't survive in Canada. **Sweet Substitute (Caressed)** which has grossed over three-quarters of a million dollars in the U.S. hasn't got any distribution in Canada.

If it has grossed that much, how much do you receive?

Oh, very little.

$20,000?

Oh, more than that.

If that is so, that you have received more than $20,000, then why should you have to work at the NFB?

Well, because I made another film called **When Tomorrow Dies,** which cost a lot of money. I got into debt. I have a family. I haven't been working prior to this. So I have to.

How long does it take from the time you start the film on the distribution road to the time you receive money off it?

18 months to two years.

The money you made from Sweet Substitute **you then plowed back into** When Tomorrow Dies, **is that correct?**

Yes.

How much does the distributor get of the profits?

50 percent. The box office takes two-thirds, then he gets 50 percent of the remaining third.

And you get?

50 percent, after all expenses are taken off, which is . . .

How much went into the promotion costs of the film?

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with HARRIET ANDERSSON

by the Director of 'Night Games'
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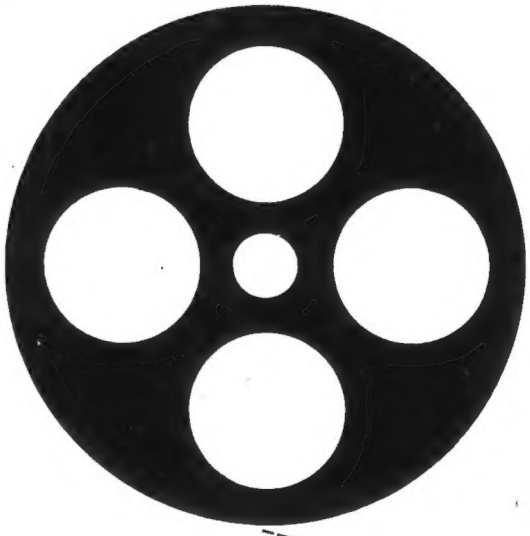

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That's difficult to say. We argue a lot about that. He says much more than I say — but he's got to show the books.

You have told me that you took a bit of a beating at the hands of the distributor, is that what you were talking about?

Yes. You always do.

Why?

They take you for a ride. Your contract says things that it shouldn't say.

Like what? Can you be specific?

Ah yeah, let's see, like . . . you should ask my accountant; he'd tell you about the $10,000 things I signed.

Did you have a lawyer with you?

At the time? Yeah, I sent it to my lawyer in Vancouver, but he's not a film contract lawyer. The trouble is that it costs money to get a film contract lawyer.

So you signed some things you shouldn't have? Where was this, in New York?

Yes. I know I would do things differently now.

Can you make money on a $25,000 picture?

You have to be really lucky.

What are the problems, aside from distribution?

A major problem in making a feature for $25,000 is that you've got to get everybody for nothing. And once you do that you run into an awful lot of difficulty because people can pull out on you. Many people have started films and their main actors have walked out on them half-way through. It's a very difficult and precarious way of doing things.

But you would do it that way again?

If I had to. I certainly wouldn't want to.

Did you see Chelsea Girls**?**

Yes, it was very interesting.

Was it superior in any way to Canadian films of the same type?

No, not technically, but it's a different environment there. New York is the centre of the world, and this guy captured something of that. But, my interests are different from his because, in my films, I want to talk about the lower middle class. It's the same everywhere — it's universal. It is the most conformist of the classes, the backbone of society, but the most frustrated — they live in quiet desperation, and sometimes not so quiet. It's the most interesting for me, because I've been brought up in it.

If you could sum up: What is the motivation behind your film-making?

I like to use a lot of action in my films — guts I guess is the word, and I think this is what it should be — it should come from the guts, it really should. Why do it, if you don't believe in it? I'm not doing it for the money, because it's too tough. There are easier ways of getting money.

T.O.

NOEL MOORE'S TRIED-AND-TRUE PRODUCERS HANDBOOK:

lesson 7

There are a number of areas in which the up and coming young producer can choose to operate and make a name for himself. Let's start at the beginning with — YOUTH.

The first thing to remember when preparing a program for YOUTH is that the last people you want watching it are young people. All the best YOUTH programs are beamed towards Grandmothers and this includes half the tv critics in Canada.

Avoid folk rock, the Monkey, the Frug and the Swim and concentrate on dance programs which feature the Viennese Waltz, the Polka and the Minuet.

The "Teens" who appear on the program should be carefully selected from Miss Cramp's Academy, Upper Canada College and similar institutions. The girls should all vaguely resemble a cross between Ann of Green Gables and Margaret of Fair Hill and the boys should all bear a close resemblance to Little Lord Fauntleroy and Horatio Alger.

Soon critics across the country will be hailing you as an exciting fresh young talent who is not afraid to experiment. The Church Advisory Council will make you an honorary member. The Catholic Womens' League, the IODE and the Mothers for Moral Rearmament will invite you to address their annual fund-raising banquets on the problems of today's teens.

And best of all, as a YOUTH producer you will qualify for the Special Youth Award which only you and two other producers can win. One makes the speech, the other presents the trophy and the pictures of all three of you will appear in the entertainment section of the weekend paper.

If the YOUTH market is closed, don't be discouraged. You can always discover the NORTH. Study the map carefully and find a river or a valley that has not been filmed by either the CBC or the NFB. It will be difficult but keep on trying and you will soon be rewarded with success.

Next you must discover an Indian or an Eskimo with a fine old face, because most films on the NORTH consist mainly of closeups of fine old faces.

The best place to start is Skid Row and your writer should be of some assistance here. The face must have lines of suffering, anguish and hardship because you want it looking at the mighty river defiantly, or the frozen mountains with unquenchable courage.

Having discovered your fine old face, all you have to do is send the camera crew up north for some location shots. Cariboo hooves drumming on frozen ground, mighty river swirling down over rocks and snow drifting across a frozen landscape.

Soon you will be in a position to organize a festival of your own films at the Montreal Filmtheque but to put this across successfully you have to hook some foreign film maker who does not speak English too well.

You sit beside him during the festival and, whenever you see him wince, explain (through an interpreter) that it was a deliberate attempt to break away from the formal and traditional.

Make sure the reporters pick up his exclamations such as, "Dats a nice a — dats a good. I likea da break a wit tradeeshun."

It is possible however that during the period you are winning your cultural spurs, both the NORTH and YOUTH are saturated. Don't be discouraged. You can always seek to interpret the FRENCH FACT.

All you need for this is an office, or even a desk in the Montreal branch of the CBC, or the French section of the NFB. Learn a couple of words of French and have a drink with a French-speaking producer.

Get into the habit of dropping enigmatic utterances such as, "Storm clouds are gathering around the Plains of Abraham," or "The Quebec Dragon is awakening from its slumber of centuries." Don't use the Winds of Change or Quiet Revolution bits — they've heard those too often.

In no time flat you'll have a bilingual script assistant and a bilingual writer to do the work while you collect awards for helping to bridge the gap between the two solitudes.

But don't accept invitations to address the annual fund-raising banquets of the Richelieu Club Ladies Auxiliary or the Daughters of St. Jean Baptiste. They'll expect you to speak French.

And above all, remember that to succeed in Canada you must never be a music maker or a dreamer of dreams. They're just bums.

You must analyse your market beforehand, package carefully and make sure your product is market-tested before you start to produce.

That way even a high school dropout is assured of success. TO

CLIP OUT AND FILE

FROM THE

BLACK ZERO

NOTEBOOK:

TOWARDS A NEW VOLUPTUARY

By John Hofsess

Most people in films talk about profit or loss (as the trade magazines do) or a film's artistic and technical aspects (as film critics do), yet the films I'm making interest me primarily in their therapeutic values — that is the key to their content and structure.

The films are designed to encourage people to examine their tastes, explore their senses, expand consciousness: in a word, to think about the "unthinkable". The aim of the films is to help "render the Unconscious conscious". In dealing with images and ideas that have ordinarily been repressed, one obviously sets the films on a collision course with middle-class sensibilities. Yet I doubt if raw shock is beneficial. A film such as Kenneth Anger's **Fireworks,** or Jack Smith's **Flaming Creatures**, probably only strengthens existing defence mechanisms, or else they generate so much anxiety in the audience, that to alleviate the anxiety, they must forcefully reject the film. Instead these films present visual metaphors, which, like the symbolic disguises in dreams, are inoffensive even to the most censorious of minds, and yet contain a depth charge, suggestive of repressed impulses.

Redpath 25 and **Black Zero** are the first two sections of a trilogy entitled **The Palace of Pleasure** (a title borrowed from William Painter's anthology of Italian erotica published in 1566). The films have a thesis but it is not presented didactically. We take depressive depths, suicides, racial violence, unthinkable wars in our stride, believing that they are regrettable but inevitable, the human psyche and human condition being what they are. Thousands of people are going to starve to death this very day, thousands more will be killed by various means. I have no idea how many are going to cry or seek the shell of "insanity" while we talk in our studiedly blasé manner about next year's model of a defective car. Against this I am asking, is change possible? Is it possible to organize the human psyche in other ways at once more creative and constructive?

I am resurrecting the voluptuary as a modern hero. It is the flip side of the **Dr. Strangelove** thesis that political and military "hawks" in all countries are engaged in activities seemingly far removed from sexual behaviour and yet possessing unmistakable sexual overtones. **Dr. Strangelove** is a wickedly funny film about sexual repression, beginning with the mechanical intercourse of two planes and ending with All-American Boy riding his penile missile to an orgy of destruction. Frustrated human animals are poor risks for the tricky experiment of civilization.

I am not simply re-stating the Freudian contention that sexual repression is at the root of all neurosis, because sexual repression is only a symptom of a much deeper self-denial — the fear to live honestly and openly with people. Our compulsory mis-education recommends reading the biographies of saints, military and political leaders, and successful businessmen as edifying examples of how to live. Yet I think we all know now where this treadmill of self-denial ultimately leads. You sacrifice this part for the state, and this part for "God", and the result isn't recognizably human anymore. We have developed an organized society, but organized for war from top to bottom of its (really gross) national productivity.

You gain insights into our society in many inadvertent ways. If a man is widely read, equally informed about Hermann Broch as he is about Hermann Kahn, he is praised for his "erudition". But if a man, even the same man, has widely travelled across all the latitudes of physical and spiritual love, he is condemned for his "promiscuity". At least until he has transposed

With Redpath 25 already in distribution, Mr. Hofsess is currently completing his second film, Black Zero, after several scrapes with agents of the old ethic. The illustrations on the following two pages are by Nicholas Kolodka.

all his base body experience into something ethereal and abstract again, a poem or painting or musical composition.

The irony of censorship is especially acute in these films. Several film printing firms have refused **Redpath 25** because of several "subliminal" sections, two and three frames each, which they termed obscene. The fact that when projected at 24 fps some sections are imperceptible consciously made no difference to them. The films celebrate the sensuality of youth guided only by a sense of wonder, a sense of beauty, and seek to undermine the repressive mechanisms of puritanism and sensual negation. That they have to pass through an anti-sexual Establishment before they can be seen by the people they were made for would undoubtedly damage them, because censoring such films is, perforce, to make them **ill**; adjustment to a sick society is maladjustment for the individual.

In Lawrence Durrell's **The Black Book**, a character named Lobo is acidly described as "if it were possible to invent a detached vagina which has an effective life of its own, then Lobo would be a profound misogynist, I am sure." It is surprising how many men who pride themselves on being sexually "normal", are in fact, severely repressed and think there is no harm done in regarding a woman as a dehumanized apparition: a cunt. With the sharp focus of their desire discarding so much of a woman, and accepting so little of her, they are as far away from loving her adequately as homosexuals are. It does seem that sexual repression is primarily a male characteristic (when women become subdivided against themselves it is from internalizing a dominating male's taboos and contradictory attitudes). It is for this reason that women are presented in these films as possessing the clue to mental and emotional health and the "masculine mystique" as something to be cured.

A man who expounds race-hatred doesn't relax any when you rationally explain the fallacy of his concept of "races". The problem runs deeper. Any group could be his scapegoat, interchangeably with the one he has chosen. Obviously he simply needs to **hate** something and the reason is beside the point. Hate-systems are numerous and sometimes well disguised. If a moral system does not lead to enriching people's lives and an increase in human understanding and compassion, then it is a hate-system with a moralistic rationale: that is, primarily a punitive system of building oneself up by tearing others down. Our society now pays 78¢ of every tax dollar for the maintenance of armed forces, development of new weapons and payments for past and present wars. It is my contention that no one can solve the world's political and ideological problems but that one can **dissolve** them by turning to more constructive pursuits. A person may not be able to change society; he may not even be able to prevent society from changing him, but anyone interested in preserving a remnant of health is practically obliged to become a psychic drop-out.

Traditionally those who are young threaten the old and established with reform; they are

called rebellious because they wish to replace old and tired tyrannies with new ones of their own device. Today's youth however, are not rebels but dropouts, and the telling difference between them is that the dropout is not prey to any ideology. His demands on the outer world are minimal because his hopes for change are not high; he is less frustrated than his predecessor because he has no great expectations to become frustrated about; you don't become alienated once you realise that Man is Dead. He is even beyond suicide because suicide is only a live option (the ironic pun is William James') providing you believe in a self worth killing. The dropout simply hangs loose and lets life happen.

Just as the visual images of the films are chosen for their ability to penetrate the censorious mechanisms of the mind and explode, the musical score is chosen for its ability to help audiences relax and regress to earlier stages in life when their actions were freer and more spontaneous. New ideas will not be born if their entry into the mind is subject to conformity with conventional beliefs and with what we call "common sense". The Palace-of-Pleasure films demand of their audience a willing suspension of common sense. The task of judicial appraisal comes later. For the moment, audiences are only required to let down their defences and dream, to meditate on the images suggested to them by the films.

Show me someone who knows the difference of shade on a peach and an avocado pear, with a mind tuned to subtlety which doesn't call everything that is similar the "same", someone as responsive to male friendship as he is to heterosexual love, someone interested in the human person rather than simply sex objects, and I'll show you someone who has no need for violence, no interest in wars, a truly creative and constructive person: a voluptuary.

Someone should take President Johnson and put him in a Japanese bath-house; they should teach him to dance to jug-band music, smoke pot and read Shakespeare sonnets. At night they would perform **Macbird!** (he'd die laughing). And then Julie Christie or Nico would come in with nothing better to do than tickle his fancy. If in the morning he still talked about "containing Communism in Viet Nam", he would be denounced as incorrigible and tossed back into the pool. One by one, various world leaders would be rounded up for "sensual therapy" — and even if you are more skeptical than I am, at least you would have to agree no harm would be done to them and they would be doing no harm to anyone else.

I deal exclusively with images. The films are not actors' vehicles, and a lot of time is spent in cutting up and flattening out a performance, reducing it to its imagistic state. In the traditional movie, the audience's interests are divided among considerations of plot, performer, and non-film elements (the reputation of stars, etc.). I am striving for films which are not simply observed by an audience, aesthetically distanced from what they are seeing, but films which happen directly to the audience with a minimum of extraneous factors. Thus you don't identify with the actors, or "follow the plot"; the films are a mental event, intimate and direct.

The role of film as "cinematherapy" is designed to assist people in rediscovering their freedom. The freedom they have come to deny themselves, and consequently others; freedoms of love and trust and tenderness. I hold that every living person is essentially mysterious: an increase in communication only deepens one's awareness and respect for the mystery of others. You can't sum them up and pin them down or label them. Man is a process, and the truth is in flux. T.O.

THE NEXT MEDIUM

by ROBERT RUSSEL

2. DEMAND BROADCASTING

The more I think about the home communicator, with its feedback cable linking it to the central computer network, the more I am convinced that broadcasting as we know it is a wierd aberration, a form of licensed piracy akin to Elizabeth's dispensations to ply the Spanish Main some years ago. (Our Lord Thompson of Fleet described it as a license to print money.) Let's look at TV: Within less than a generation, most of the juicy VHF bands have been leased by the government to commercial interests, who put out identical schedules of programs on a competitive basis. In the morning if you've got nothing to do you can watch housewives' breakfast programs or school shows. Afternoon: movies -- hacked up, usually by incompetents, for commercials -- or housewives' programs. Then kiddy shows, news, situation serials filmed in Hollywood, and there's often something different and special on before the news. Plus (of course) movies, movies -- truncated for time and commercials.

I'm not suggesting this is some vast wasteland, on the contrary, there's great watching there for people with the brains and imagination to appreciate it. I'm complaining about something else, from another perspective. It's a terrible waste. Five networks, spending hundreds of millions to bring me a hundred hours a day of broadcasting, of which I might see three or four. The hours I'm free to watch, they're showing situation comedies or variety or hockey. But if I wanted to stay up until one or three a.m. I could see some movies I've missed, and the classroom documentary on at 10 this morning might have appealed to me. I'll never know. Sunday afternoon they've got all the goodies on at the same time. Imagine spending Sunday afternoon indoors with the blinds pulled down! Sunday evenings in Canada we can choose between the two only really interesting public affairs shows of the week. Choose between! A couple of hours of interesting programs and they're on at the same time. What a rich country to be able to squander its resources so insanely!

Will it improve? Apparently there's still room for a channel or maybe two in our larger cities, and then there are a few channels in the UHF band, plus the possibility that Arthur Clarke's Comsats will broadcast straight to the home. Will this add the variety? Will this mean I'll be able to see what I want from the schedule, when I'm ready to see it? Of course not. It'll mean twice as much of the same. The broadcaster doesn't care what I want. He's after statistics, not individuals. And so, if I want to get the most out of life, I'd better conform; I'd better learn to like what the Trendex or Nielson people say most people like. Mass media breed conformists, not individuals. The pressures aren't too difficult to understand. But that doesn't make it any the less insane.

The alternative might be called "Demand Broadcasting". Let's start with the cable. In a big city, we can only use some of the twelve channels: stations can't be right next to each other on the band without causing intolerable interference. Not so on a cable. Twelve channels per cable, and I suppose as many cables as you like. Twelve cables, a hundred and forty-four channels, etc. Better still, a single two-way cable with a telephone dial would hook my commie into anything I wanted to see, provided they had the right things and the right program in the computer at the other end.

So the next step is to figure out the other end. I'd dial the CBC, or the CTV, and ask the computer for a particular program from the week's catalogue. The program might change every Sunday, perhaps around noon so as not to keep the Christians away from church. We could look at anything we wanted to on any of the networks (still with commercials, I suppose, unless we want to pay for it ourselves), and see it when we liked, or as often as we liked, anytime during the rest of the week. If a friend tells us about a new program and we haven't seen it, we dial it in. If we want to see a children's documentary about lions or dolphins or the New Maths, we dial it in. No more arguments with the younger generation about which shows we will watch: we take turns.

The critic is in a far more influential position with this system than with the old pirate broadcasting. If he says a show is terrific, people will have the rest of the week to catch it. This will give the advertisers a strong incentive to put out exceptional shows, for now there is no reason why every show shouldn't reach its maximum audience. There's no reason why a show should be withdrawn simply because a rival network has put out a better show on the same time slot. Now it's no longer either, but both.

There's another thing that always frustrated me about broadcasting in the old pirate tradition. If the National Film Board or CBS put out a

good series of half-hours: say three or four or thirteen . . . I'd either have to be at my TV at 9:30 on Tuesday nights, without fail, or the series would fall apart. Yet it seems crazy to turn down a night out for one half-hour TV series, no matter how excellent. Also, it's hard to remember what was said in the introductory program thirteen weeks before, as the series wraps up to a mighty conclusion. With demand broadcasting, I can watch a series over a weekend, maybe two or three episodes at a time. (At any rate, at a rhythm that suits my learning speed, not the scheduling problems of some network executive harassed by an impossible job.) This, of course, suggests that I can call back material from the network archives. I expect I'll have to pay extra for it, unless the sponsor wishes to make it available (I'll see his message every time I see a program!). I'll probably pay for backdated programs the same way I'd pay for other services on my commie: the information retrieval service from the computerized library network, the stock exchange data, medical information, legal advice, computer dating, or a game of chess with the machine.

Now, in case this article should fall into the hands of the establishment (the CBC), perhaps I'd better explain what demand broadcasting means to the network. First, it'll mean they'll put out less programs per week. Excused from the idiotic responsibility of filling 120 hours or more a week, they can concentrate (with perhaps half that output) on competing with the commie's other attractions, confident that no good program, no matter how obscure, would go unnoticed. Someone would see it, the word would get around and before the week was out, the sleeper program would be famous. The bad program would waste nobody's time but the critic's. And he's paid to look.

Of course there'd still be public affairs, the live-from-Cape-Kennedy lift-off (which those who missed could see later that day), and the news and commentary. But these could be continuous, and if something caught our attention we could find out all about it. One of the most frustrating things about today's news broadcasts is all the time they waste on disasters and political issues (or non-issues). No science news. No arts news. No news about model railroading or whatever my hobby might be. Just airplane wreckage and John Diefenbaker poorly lit in the corridors of Parliament summarizing rather badly what he said brilliantly in the House half an hour before. Who chooses what is news for me? Certainly not me. With the present pirate system, I have no choice. With demand broadcasting, I can listen to the headlines, choose the items I feel worth the time, and explore them in as much depth, and with as much background, as the whole system could provide.

After gorging on the details, it is unpleasant to leave the world of the next medium and return to the insane system now being developed. Canada is opening up ETV. The States is opening up Public TV and Instructional TV. The Americans are trying to restrict cable TV and have banished subscription cable TV from California in a most irregular fashion. And everybody now seems to want to get hold of the Comsats so that they can have the whole world watching their programs at the very same instant in time. The profusion is wasteful, increasing my frustration without really increasing my choice. There must be a principle here, a way to tell if a technological development is good or bad, or is being used wisely or no. In the final article, next issue, then, I'll open the discussion on the moral issues raised by the next medium, by the commie, and see if we can't figure out some rule of thumb to tell the good guys from the bad. T.O.

LA LOGIQUE INTERNE DE GODARD

PAR PIERRE-FELIX DE RAVEL D'ESCLAPON

Godard le Fou — Godard le Génie, on l'adore ou on le voue aux gémonies. Pas de milieu avec Godard: ou l'enthousiasme délirant ou la critique la plus acerbe. Chacun de ses films est un electro-choc pour les spectateurs: on ne reste pas indifférent devant un film de Godard, on ne *peut* pas rester indifférent. Ses détracteurs lui reprochent son abondance de citations, ses trop nombreuses références cinématographiques, la platitude ou la trop grande simplicité de ses films; on le traite d'obsédé sexuel, d'épate-bourgeois, de faiseur de canulars; certains vont même jusqu'à le trouver "mortellement, pharamineusement, pachydermiquement soporifique". Pourquoi cette levée de boucliers? Pourquoi cette exaspération au sortir de la plupart de ses films? Quelle technique emploie donc Godard pour provoquer de tels chocs, et surtout, quel est son but?

Pour pouvoir répondre à ces questions, si tant est qu'elle aient une réponse, il nous faut essayer de cerner ses processus de pensée; en un mot, essayer de mettre à nu sa dialectique. Comme toute dialectique qui se respecte, la dialectique interne des films de JLG comporte trois termes que nous pouvons appeler: le parti des choses, le parti des apparences et le parti des évidences.

Le premier terme, que nous avons appelé le parti des choses, est exprimé par cette constante volonté qu'a Godard de filmer pour filmer. Critique aux *Cahiers du Cinéma*, le jeune Godard, encore tout imprégné par la crise des valeurs qui a secoué l'intelligentsia après la deuxième guerre mondiale, a écrit cette phrase qui témoigne de sa volonté de mettre en évidence tout ce qui lui plaît, en un mot, de prendre le parti des choses: "Le vrai cinéma consiste seulement à mettre quelque chose devant sa caméra. Nous ne pensons pas, nous sommes pensés. Un poète nomme cela le parti des choses. Et non pas le parti pris de l'homme pour les choses mais le parti pris des choses seules". Il est, en effet, significatif de constater que le premier film qu'a tourné JLG en 1954 s'appelle *Opération béton* avec la construction d'un barrage comme sujet. Cette volonté de faire des documentaires, de dire ce qui lui plaît, permet de considérer sa "manie" de faire des citations sous un autre jour. En effet, pour JLG, faire des citations, emprunter à autrui, c'est manifester sa volonté de prendre le parti des choses qui lui plaisent: "si vous avez envie de dire une chose, il n'y a qu'une solution: le dire". Pourquoi cette volonté objectera-t-on? Godard s'en explique lui-même par la bouche de Fritz Lang dans le *Mépris* — "La beauté de l'Odyssée réside justement dans cette croyance en la réalité telle qu'elle est, telle qu'elle se présente objectivement, dans cette forme qui ne se laisse pas décomposer et qui est ce qu'elle est: à prendre ou à laisser".

Au cours de cette première étape, JLG cherche donc à tout accueillir, à regarder sans juger: ce qui est difficile comme il le constate dans un de ses films qui va sortir sous peu: *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle:* "Ai-je raison de filmer cette maison plutôt que cette autre". En effet, choisir une prise de vue, un angle, un type de plan c'est déjà introduire un élément de jugement en séparant quelque chose du reste du réel qui se présente devant l'objectif de la caméra. Il cherche aussi — et c'est très évident pour le moins attentif des spectateurs — à accumuler les contradictions et nous verrons plus loin quelles sont les procédés techniques qu'il emploie pour arriver à ce but. Mais pourquoi accumuler ces contradictions?

Je crois que pour trouver une réponse à cette question, il faut prendre un élément en considération, un élément qui est au coeur de l'oeuvre de Godard: le doute. Godard, jeune cinéphile fervent des cinémathèques est venu à se poser les questions suivantes: que se passe-t-il quand on sort du cinéma? Quand il faut regarder tout seul? Qu'est ce qui est le plus important: l'intérieur ou l'extérieur? Le cinéma n'est-il qu'un distributeur d'illusions? N'est-ce pas Michel-Ange, le héros des *Carabiniers*, qui se laisse abuser et se précipite sur la jolie femme en train de prendre son bain, crève l'écran, et rompt le charme? C'est là que le doute apparaît et c'est ce qui met les gens mal à l'aise: on n'aime pas les gens qui doutent ou se méfie de la méfiance; on est hostile à tout ce qui pourrait nous tirer de notre léthargie conformiste et bourgeoise! C'est ce doute qui pousse Godard à accumuler les contradictions, à mélanger les genres, et ces contradictions nous conduisent au deuxième terme de sa dialectique.

Toutes ces contradictions, accumulées à plaisir, peuvent conduire à penser que Godard est cynique; qu'il se moque du monde — et Dieu sait si ce reproche lui a été fait! Cette deuxième phase, le parti des apparences, va s'opérer grâce à ce cynisme et suivant un procédé très particulier. Son cynisme, tout irritant qu'il soit, est un cynisme positif. On pourrait certes le comparer à celui d'Antisthène qui prétendait qu'on ne pouvait formuler aucun jugement, pas même "La terre est ronde" car le verbe "être" exprime une identité et la seule identité est celle d'une chose avec elle-même: "La terre est . . . la terre", "Ce qui est rond . . . est rond" ou encore "Une femme est une femme", *Vivre sa Vie*. En quoi ce cynisme est-il positif? En quoi va-t-il aider a réduire les apparences prises sur le vif par la caméra? Il se refuse de comparer les choses avec ce qu'elles devraient être. Il ne trouve aucun savoir satisfaisant; aucun langage adéquat et rigoureux. Mais c'est parce que la réalité de l'être dépasse toute formulation, toute mémoire, toute science, tout jugement: il vaut mieux voir que savoir, il vaut mieux être qu'avoir. Cette deuxième phase peut donc se schématiser de la manière suivante: Godard filme des choses, mais le doute lui dit que ces choses ne sont probablement que des apparences. Il va donc laisser se décanter ces apparences dans un bain de cynisme.

Le troisième terme est donc celui du réel mis à nu: c'est le parti des évidences. Ce qui caractérise cette troisième phase c'est un réalisme froid, simple, trop simple, même simpliste, d'après les détracteurs d' *Une femme mariée*. Ce réalisme n'est que

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Monsieur de Ravel étudie actuellement le droit à l'Université de Montréal. Il va enseigner l'histoire du cinéma français a l'Ecole Française d'Eté de McGill pendant l'été prochain.

l'expression d'une ascèse du regard, du cinéma: la vérité est dépouillée de l'apparence. Cependant, on pourrait penser que cette troisième phase est identique à la première. Non, car il ne faut pas oublier la deuxième phase: le cynisme qui laisse aux choses le soin de se juger d'elles-même.

Comment cette dialectique va-t-elle s'exprimer sur le plan de la technique cinématographique et du style? D'après Godard, le rôle de la caméra est de saisir des attitudes contradictoires et de les confronter pour en faire jaillir l'unité. C'est pourquoi il se refuse à employer la technique du montage, c'est la raison pour laquelle il relie des plans qui "jurent" et utilise la musique pour souligner les ruptures de ton. Son but, ce faisant est d'introduire le point de vue critique dans le film pour conduire à cette distanciation si chère à Brecht. Il en tire la conclusion qu'il ne faut pas se prendre au sérieux, ni se regarder de trop près, et qu'il ne faut pas davantage prendre le monde au sérieux. C'est là que Godard se sépare de Brecht: pour Brecht le jeu du théâtre nous ramène au sérieux de la vie alors que, pour Godard le jeu de la vie nous renvoie au jeu du théâtre.

En guise de conclusion, revenons sur cette notion de contradiction si essentielle dans la pensée de Godard et proposons non pas une clef mais ce que nous croyons être la réponse de Godard à ces contradictions. Chez Godard en effet, les provocations dans les films sont des étapes vers la liberté:

1— Les personnages font n'importe quoi: "Tout se passe au niveau de l'animal; et encore cet animal est-il filmé d'un point de vue végétal quand ce n'est pas minéral" (le fameux parti des choses). Godard peint donc la liberté sur fond d'animal.

2— Godard filme des gens qui disent n'importe quoi et exprime cette notion dans la bouche de F. Lang: "Il est logique que l'illogique aille contre la logique". C'est le même processus d'écriture ou de parole automatique que celui employé par les Surréalistes: il faut accepter de trouver son langage donc,
— il faut accepter de vivre selon l'instinct pour voir où commence la liberté.
— de faire la bête pour voir où commence l'ange.
— de se tromper pour découvrir le mot juste.
— de mentir pour découvrir la vérité.

En effet il est bien connu que les valeurs ne s'exaltent que par leurs contraires, que le noir fait ressortir le blanc.

Mais pour logique que soit cette construction, il manque encore un élément très important pour arriver à comprendre l'attitude de Godard vis à vis de ses contradictions: l'humour. Pour JLG l'humour c'est la réponse à ce doute. Il accepte les contradictions. C'est une soumission inconditionnée à l'absurde, à la fantaisie d'un monde qui nous échappe, aux coquetteries de l'autre sexe, aux caprices de notre propre nature: "Il vaut mieux en rire"...

L'univers de Godard, dont nous avons essayé de vous présenter la logique interne, est un univers chaotique. En effet, il peint à la fois les choses et notre conscience des choses, ce qui le différencie et le rapproche de Welles ou de Resnais. Godard dépouille la conscience, critique le savoir, confesse le péché originel du cinéaste, la voracité de l'oeil et de l'esprit, la soif de possession derrière lesquels se cache un redoutable manque d'être. Le cynisme, dans cette perspective, est donc un moyen pour faire "tabula rasa" de tous les préjugés, de toutes les apparences qui encombrent la conscience. C'est un acide qui sert à corroder la complexité. Toute l'oeuvre de Godard tend donc à la simplicité et, ce que ne voyaient pas beaucoup de gens, c'est que cette simplicité s'obtient à partir d'une effrayante complexité: on part de *Marienbad* et on aborde aux rivages d'*Ulysse*. T.O

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CATALOGUE ON REQUEST

I'm a television producer and director; but wholly by accident. No well-articulated electronic consciousness (something which I might have — should have — picked up in University) drove me to the choice. It's to this sort of general unawareness — in Governments, in Universities, in Broadcasters, in just-people — that Take One objects. Hence this regular column, probing the super-total impact which THAT BOX, television, has on all our lives.

— Moses Znaimer, Television Correspondent

COLOR Television: A New LANGUAGE?

By JOSEPH SCANLON

A study reported in 1953 suggests that persons watching an event via television get a different impression than those actually present. A 1955 study by the same persons suggests that viewers will get a different impression from the same television picture if the commentators are changed. Marshall McLuhan has told us in his now-famous phrase, "the medium is the message", that the medium shapes the spectator of an event. He has applied his theories to the medium of print, to radio and to television. The question can still be asked, however: does the addition of color change television? Is color television the same medium as black and white television? Or are we dealing with two different phenomena?

The exciting nature of this question led to the present paper which outlines a simple experiment performed with the assistance of 21 students in the graduate year in Journalism at Carleton University, Ottawa.

The hypotheses formed and tested by this experiment are as follows:

1. Color changes the emotional impact of television.
2. Color changes the importance of the spoken word in television and, thus, the significance of a commentator.
3. Color makes the viewer more a participant and less an observer.

In short, color television is not television as we know it now: it is a new language.

Before outlining the support for these hypotheses found in this experiment, the nature of the experiment needs to be described.

The experiment was conducted on Wednesday, March 8, 1967, a significant day in Canada. It was the day of the funeral of the late Georges Philias Vanier, Governor-General of Canada, the first Canadian to die in office while head of state. Not surprisingly, the publicly-owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation decided to give detailed attention to the Vanier funeral in the form of live, in-color coverage of the procession and solemn funeral mass. This coverage was to be done with only one set of cameras and commentators so that black and white viewers would see the same picture and hear the same sounds as color television viewers. It seemed like an ideal occasion for a test of the difference, if any, between black and white and color television.

The students were, therefore, told that they were to write a report about the Vanier funeral. They were told that they could take notes if they wished and that they could add any comments they wished. They were told that the sole departure from normal practice would be that they would be divided into two groups and that these groups would be kept segregated until the reports were concluded. They were told one group would watch color, one black and white television. The entire group of 21 was briefed at the same time; so the instructions were identical for all.

Once the briefing was over the students proceeded to the CBC headquarters building, a few minutes drive from Carleton, where they were taken to separate rooms, one room with color television and one with black and white television. They remained in these rooms for over two hours watching the broadcast of the procession, funeral and post-funeral procession, then returned to Carleton separately and were kept separated until they finished writing their reports.

The two groups of students who participated in this experiment were selected by random methods and, according to pre-experiment questioning, were almost identical. The average age of the two groups was just one year apart. The larger black and white group (11) had one more person born and educated in Ontario than the smaller color group (10) but the other backgrounds were the same: one from the west coast, one from the prairies, one from Quebec, one from the Maritime provinces, two from outside Canada's 10 provinces. Each group had the same number of persons with first and second class honors degrees and with pass degrees. Each group had the same number of married persons

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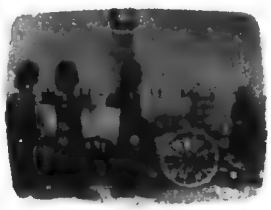
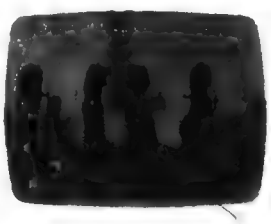



and total children for each group was identical. The one apparent difference was the male/female ratio. The black and white group had a seven/four male ratio; the color group had a six/four female ratio.

Despite the apparent homogeneity of the two groups, an analysis of the reports, a prepared questionnaire and a post-report group discussion suggested that there were four major differences between the two groups:

1. The color group were more aware of color and made twice as many references to color in their reports.
2. The black and white group wrote far longer and far more detailed reports.
3. The black and white group paid far more attention to the commentators and showed a pronounced irritation at some of their observations.
4. The color group appeared to have been far more moved by the funeral and their reports contained a good deal more emotional content.

In short, color appeared to be a more absorbing medium.

1. The color group were more aware of color and made twice as many references to color in their reports.

This finding is hardly surprising. The color group averaged 8.3 color references to 3.8 for the black and white group. The color group also ranged from a low of one reference to a high of 23, compared to a high of nine and a low of one for the black and white group. No student completely omitted color though some references were to "black armbands" or "white robes", colors presumably obvious enough even on black and white receiving sets. Some of the color group reports, however, contained detailed color references. For example;

> Cardinal Leger wore a gold crown while giving the homily. It was a magnificent sight, with the white-clad priests, the gold crown, the elaborate carvings and architecture of the church and the colors of the stained glass windows with a blue sky coming through the slits of window and the white candles around the altar.

2. The black and white group wrote far longer and far more detailed reports.

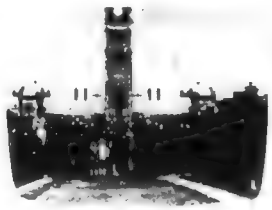
The simplest measure of difference between the two groups was length. The color group averaged 4.8 pages of copy. The black and white group averaged 6.6 pages of copy. The longest story, 16 pages, was written by a member of the black and white group; the next longest, 13 pages, by a member of the color group.

More important, an analysis of the copy suggested that the difference in length occurred because the black and white reports included more detail. A chart was made listing 10 details, each of which appeared in at least nine of the 21 stories: all these details were both shown on camera and mentioned by the commentator. (The details selected for this check were as follows; Dr. Jean Vanier, son of the late Governor-General, read the epistle; Father Benedict, a Trappist monk, said the prayer for the dead; the Governor-General's hat and sword were on the casket during the procession; Royal Canadian Air Force jets passed overhead in a salute to the head of state; three non Roman Catholic clerics said special prayers during the service; the vice-president of the United States, Hubert Humphrey, represented the U.S. government; the pallbearers were eight sergeants from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment; the casket was followed by a riderless horse, boots reversed in stirrups; Cardinal Leger, the chief celebrant at the mass, wore white robes as did his concelebrants; Cardinal Leger, a personal friend of the Vanier family, spoke privately to Mrs. Vanier for a few moments at the end of the service.) The black and white group's reports contained far more of these details: five of the top seven students were from the black and white group and the chances were two-to-one that a student above average was from the black and white group.

Other, less basic details such as the fact that the acting head of state, Mr. Justice Taschereau stumbled when he entered the church, or the fact that Hubert Humphrey was accompanied by the Hon. Paul Martin, secretary of state for external affairs, were also more common in the black and white reports. These details could be seen but were not referred to by the commentators. The black and white group were more aware, apparently, of picture as well as of sound.

3. The black and white group paid far more attention to the commentators and showed a pronounced irritation at some of their observations.

The television sets were turned off before any credits were given so the two groups never heard the names of the commentators. Nor were the commentators shown on camera. However, the two men who participated, Norman DePoe and Stanley Burke, have voices well known to Canadian television viewers. Yet, despite the fact that their voices were heard for more than two hours, they



made little impact on the color group. The 10 students in the color group made only nine references to commentators in their reports and only one reference was by name. They had only three observations about the commentary.

In startling contrast, the black and white group had 111 references to commentators, 67 by name, and 45 critical comments. A chart shows this incredible difference.

	B & W	Color
References to Commentators	111	9
References by Name	67	1
Critical Comments	45	3

One could speculate that, by pure chance, one group knew the men and the other group did not. This conclusion seems unlikely: the group discussion made quite clear that one group simply had not noticed.

Far more interesting, too, than the mere fact that the black and white group were aware of the commentators is the number of critical comments. Ten of the 11 students in the black and white group offered criticisms of the commentators. Only two of the colored group offered comments. A few of the black and white references were as follows:

> DePoe's voice, somewhat subdued in an effort to add solemnity to the occasion, sounded like someone with laryngitis, and his attempts to be profound were laughable, and detracted from the ceremony.
>
> CBC newsman Norman DePoe frequently interjected sometimes inane remarks.
>
> The Cardinal sprinkled holy water on the coffin and swung the incense. As Burke said, "he incenses it." (Hardly the correct use of the word, I suspect.)

These comments were all from different members of the black and white group. In contrast, the colored comments were as follows:

> There was a suitable lack of comment at most times . . .
>
> . . . the funeral coverage did not include much emotion. The commentator seemed to dwell more on buildings and history . . .

The impact of the commentators was strikingly different between the two groups. But what about the emotional impact of the program?

4. The color group appeared to have been far more moved by the funeral and their reports contained a good deal more emotional content.

Emotional content is, admittedly, not an easy thing to measure and anyone undertaking such analysis must be uncomfortably aware of some of the difficulties in this area. However, the differences seemed clear. One member of the black and white group wrote in his report, "I really wished I could have attended in person." One of the color group wrote, in contrast, "the golden glow of the Basilica gave me the feeling I was really there." The color reports did read as if the writer was really there.

> The terseness of his face reflected his sorrow and pride in his late father.
>
> His classic profile showed almost no emotion except for a tightening of the lips.
>
> I felt surely aware of the country's great loss.

This was only a brief, introductory experiment. The group was small and the findings may be open to question. There may also be simple explanations: the color gives a more total impression so detail becomes less important; the black and white limitations force the viewer to rely on the commentator and thus lead to irritation at anything not explained; the emotional impact is created by the fact that some colors are warmer than black and white. Finally, it could be held that those involved in the experiment had not been acclimatized to color television: therefore, all results were conditioned by the initial fascination of color TV and have no validity. This challenge may be accurate and, if it is, it is, of course, devastating. But if the challenge is not correct then the hypotheses put forward in this paper and supported by this experiment may force a re-examination of all our television theories in the light of a new medium, color television.

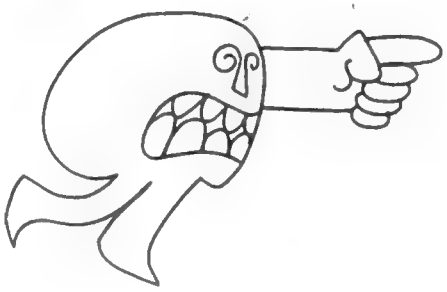
Suppose for a moment that an educational television program has the choice between color and black and white: which is more likely to leave the viewer with a knowledge of the contents of a lecture?

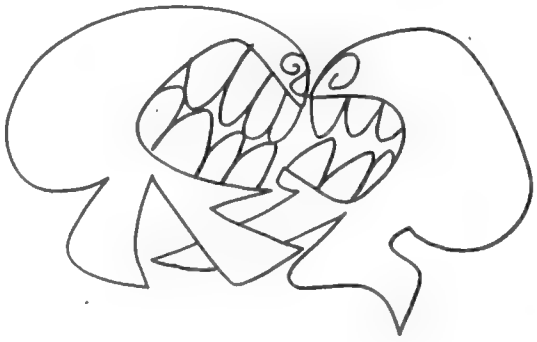
Suppose children are allowed to watch a boxing match in color or black and white: which is more likely to be the more absorbing and have the most serious impact?

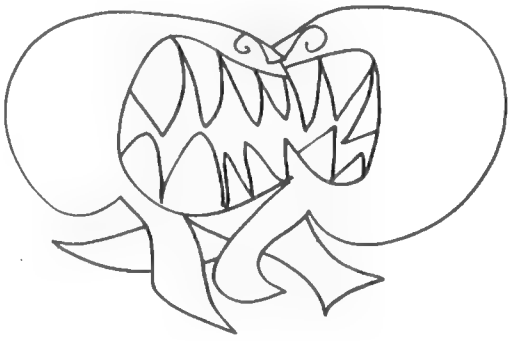
Suppose the distribution of color and black and white is on economic lines and, therefore, perhaps on racial lines: does this mean that television, in its two forms, will become a divisive force?

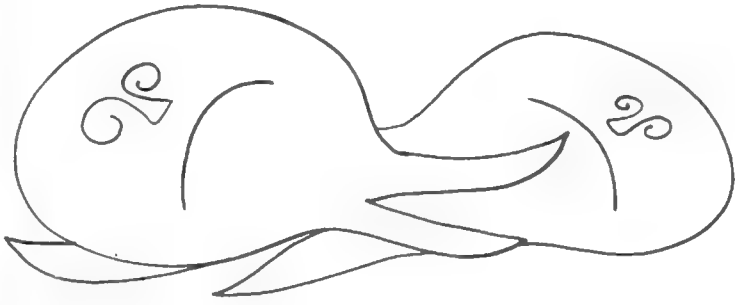
One further finding, based on the post-experiment questionnaire, leaves some further food for thought. Asked to estimate the age of Dr. Jean Vanier, the two groups averaged 10 years apart, with the color group giving the younger average estimate. Ageing politicians may get a second lease on life if color permeates fast enough. TO

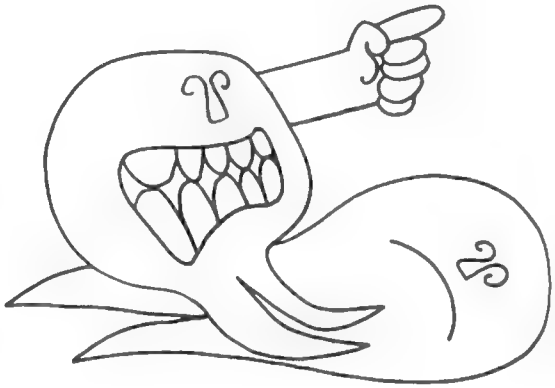
THE CRITIC

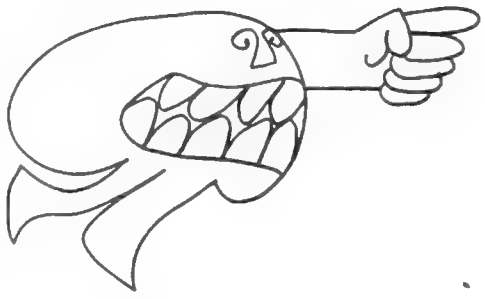


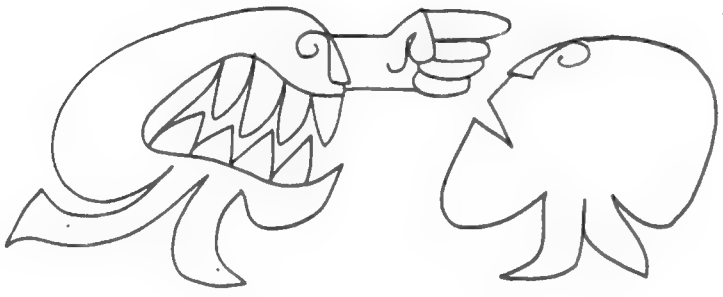


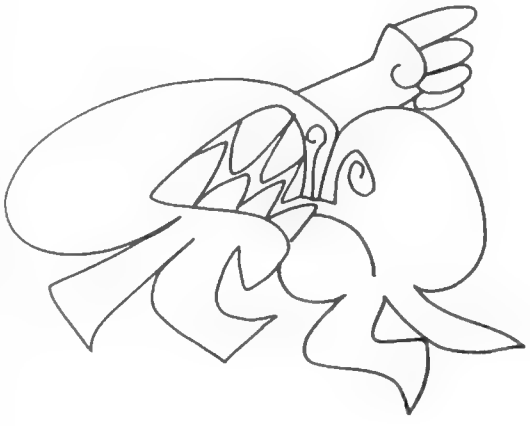


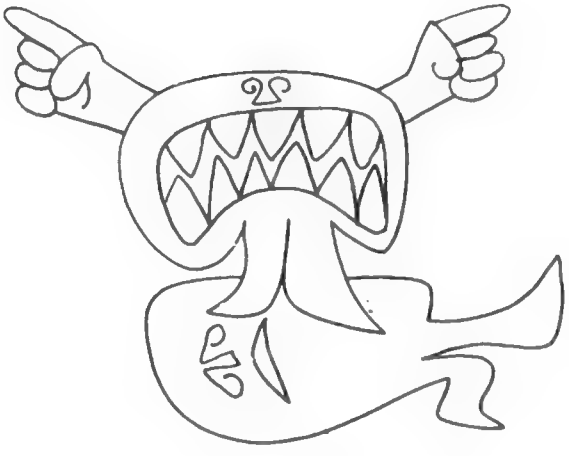


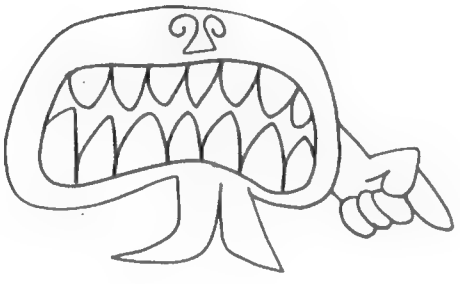


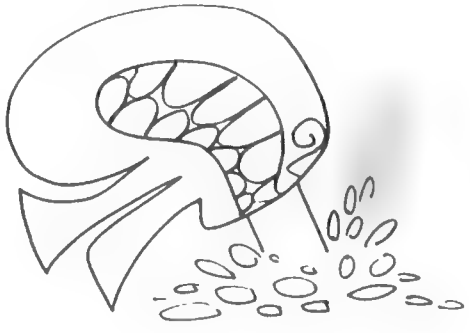












REVIEWS

BLOW-UP

Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Produced by Carlo Ponti. Screenplay by Michelangelo Antonioni and Tonino Guerra in collaboration with Edward Bond. Story: Michelangelo Antonioni. Camera: Carlo di Palma. Editors: Frank Clarke and Claude Watson. Cast: Vanessa Redgrave, David Hemmings, Sarah Miles.

In New York, even during the worst snow storm of the season, long lines snake around a small theatre on the fashionable east side. Nearby, in one of the city's largest department stores, there's a "Blow-Up at Best's", subtitled "A Journey in Fashion and Photography", complete with an elevator lit with flashing strobe lights, "the premiere appearance", as the full-page ads put it, "of 7 'Blow-Up' inspired fashions" photographed "by 7 exciting young photographers", all of this "new world of fashion, fashion photography and kinetic art set within an electrodelic light-motion-sound environment". Antonioni has spawned a monster.

I can recall no comparable extravaganza to ballyhoo any other foreign film, no "Yojimbo Jamboree" or "Cul-de-Sac Cut-Ups". Some might maintain this farcical sideshow is a result of the nervousness of a big film company trying to hawk an enigmatic commodity. But it is perhaps significant that the real deluge of publicity came **after** the first release of the film, **after** it had begun to sell a remarkable lot of tickets. Now, according to a flabbergasted **Variety**, which had originally predicted a rather shaky future for the film ("Art houses for sure but average U.S. audience likely to be puzzled"), **Blow-Up** is breaking records ("Hot!", "Terrific!", "Boffo!") all over the country. The average U.S. audience may be puzzled, but they're enjoying it: **Blow-Up** is big business.

Of all the cineastes working today, with the exception of Bresson and some Underground citizens, Antonioni would appear the least likely to have made a commercial success. His themes of desperate alienation and melancholy attempts at a kind of tentative communication, his deliberate, sometimes mournfully slow pacing, would all seem poison to the process of commercial filmmaking. Yet it is a safe guess that **Blow-Up** will be the biggest foreign moneymaker, at least in America, since **La Dolce Vita.** How did Antonioni do it? Simply, he has made his complex, sometimes painfully private world more accessible, much as Fellini did in **La Dolce Vita.** To use a less polite and, I'm afraid, more accurate word, he has simplified — even bastardized — his personal vision into a kind of mod opera in the grand manner.

The plot, a thesaurus of moods and scenes that have long obsessed Antonioni, is, typically, no more than a kind of motivational peg. Thomas, a young and extremely successful London photographer who might simultaneously be characterized as cool, callous and glutted, discovers he has a particularly valuable roll of film in his possession. While making some photos in a park, he photographs what appears to be a quarrel between two lovers. When the young girl involved insists on having the pictures returned, and goes so far as to track him back to his studio, Thomas gives her a dummy roll of film and develops the real negatives himself. By making a series of enlargements, he discovers that he has recorded what looks very much like a murder.

This kind of summary, however, is as misleading as saying **L'Avventura** is the story of a search for a missing girl. In Antonioni, the tailoring is always far more important than the fabric, but here the director has chosen only to modify some of his more fashionable conceits. In mood and execution, the scenes of contemporary London remind one of the all-night party in **La Notte;** the desolation of the landscape, especially in the park scenes with an ambiguous sign of Antonioni's own design towering over the whole scene, evokes strong memories of **Red Desert,** as Thomas' orgy with the teenage girls recalls the sad, drunken afternoon revelry in the shack in the same film; the element of mystery descends directly from **L'Avventura,** the aimless lovemaking of Thomas and the girl, from **Eclipse**, and so on.

Indeed, **Blow-Up** has something for everyone; more than a compendium of Antonioni, it is the definitive contemporary film. Fashions, fashion models, fashion photographers; lustrous automobiles; pot parties, an orgy or two, some nudity; rock and roll; London, that **Time** magazine gay. switched-on, Technicolored London; and, for those who may not be terribly interested in the World of Mod (whoever and wherever they may be, God bless them), a murder — perhaps.

Something for everyone — but nothing, really. **Blow-Up** may be a continuation of the traditional Antonioni themes, but it is not a development: it is merely redundant. And twice as offensive because it is so thoroughly adulterated and simplistic. The complexities of **L'Avventura** have been replaced with sophistries and caricatures.

Thomas is a kind of robot, dead from the neck up, whose one chance for salvation is (too ironically) the

stranger's murder: this is his chance for involvement in a real, human emotion, no matter how base it may be, one that hasn't been smothered by familiarity — something new. It matters little whether the murder did actually happen. The response, the human response, generated by the concept is paramount. Good enough, but hardly original. Hitchcock has been playing variations on this theme **(I Confess, Vertigo, Marnie)** for years with much less pomposity and far more success. Antonioni has taken this premise and dressed it up in the latest fashions off the shelf of some cinematic Carnaby Street boutique.

Because of Antonioni's seemingly unabashed quest for Now, **Blow-Up** contains at least three of the silliest scenes of the year, each crippled by a shocking naivete of conception and executed with an almost elephantine tendentiousness. The first and, horrible to say, most widely admired of these — indeed, one of the most highly praised scenes in the entire film — is the picture session with the model Varuschka that changes none to slowly or subtly into a metaphor for copulation. It really looks much more like what the kids in my old neighborhood called "dry humping", but the point gets across just the same: all emotion, and, by implication, all human endeavor, is a sham, strictly functionary, strictly routine. One has only to think of the conclusion of **La Notte** to regret the excruciating obviousness of this scene all the more.

Second is the rock-and-roll concert with the Yardbirds, which looks at first like a satire, then degenerates into a sop soaked in symbolism that might have made even Stanley Kramer think twice: Thomas fights for a meaningless souvenir and, once having gotten it, throws it away with a shrug, gratuitously emphasizing that, in this perverse world, all values are meaningless — a tired point that Antonioni has previously made far too apparent. Third, the pot party, melodramatic, unconvincing, with Varuschka making an already inane line sound even more like a creaky vaudeville feed-and-reply:

HE: I thought you were in Paris.
SHE (high): I am in Paris.

The sniggery cleverness of this exchange is typical, it seems to me, of the style of the whole film: superficial, self-conscious, vulgar.

It might even be said that **Blow-Up** is Antonioni's **Dolce Vita.** The comparison is not quite as facile as it might first sound. Obviously both films deal with the same kind of careless, overripe way of life, simultaneously exploiting and condemning it, and obviously, too, both films were made for money and audience. Yet Fellini seemed more at home within the commercial framework than Antonioni; if he was exploiting the **dolce vita** for an audience, he was also using it as a kind of vast metaphor for a human circus, manipulating people around the screen in wonderful set pieces like the ascent to the dome of St. Peter's and the false miracle in the rain. Antonioni, by contrast, is completely overwhelmed, and in desperation seems almost to borrow a Fellini trademark. The group of clowns which, appearing at the very beginning and end of the film, forms a parenthesis around the body of the action might have been lifted intact out of **Juliet of the Spirits.** In Fellini, they are charming dream fragments; in Antonioni, they are irresolvable interrogatives.

If the one great fault of **Blow-Up** is its obviousness, then this clown troupe is the cropper: in a film top-heavy and listing with symbolism, these clowns are totally without meaning. By framing the action and allowing Antonioni to bring his protagonist back full circle, they serve a purely mechanical purpose. Their symbolic function (obviously intended to be great, since they appear at two such crucial points) is completely arbitrary. I have heard it said — apparently without shame — that the clowns personify the Spirit of Life and Thomas' returning the imaginary ball to them is a symbol of his return to feeling a normal kind of emotion, a sign of genuine participation in life. How does one answer something like this? By smiling politely and getting away as soon as possible? Or by saying that any director who drags in such a metaphor deserves exactly that kind of interpretation?

In any event, Antonioni has tapped his audience, those stupidly, indiscriminately reverent cinematic

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illiterates who crawl out of the walls and overrun the theatres as if by some magic signal, waiting to see this year's chic intellectual curiosity. Certainly not dictated by real choice, their action isn't even a duty: it's a reflex. And how much quicker if the object on display was made in "swinging London!" With fashion models! Photographers! Rock! Pot! Now! Perfect.

Jay Cocks

THE CONNECTION

Produced by Lewis Allen and Shirley Clarke. Directed and edited by Shirley Clarke. Written by Jack Gelber (based on his play). Director of Photography: Arthur J. Ornitz. Music: Freddie Redd, Jackie McLean, Michael Mattos, Larry Ritchie. Cast: Warren Finnerty, Garry Goodrow, Jerome Raphel, Roscoe Browne, Henry Proach and William Redfield. Distributor: Film Canada.

Six years after it was made, Shirley Clarke's **The Connection** is finally being distributed in Canada, but even at this late date it seems a strikingly original film. (Though it does now seem absurd that it should ever have been such a **cause celebre** because the characters refer to heroin as "shit".)

The Connection is about a group of drug addicts gathered in an apartment to await the arrival of their "connection" with some heroin. They are being photographed by a documentary film maker who has promised to pay for the drugs if the junkies will allow him to make a film about them. **The Connection** is presented as if it were made from the footage shot by the film director and his cameraman. (Though because of the continuity of music or dialogue involved, it did seem to me that some of the sequences couldn't really have been shot with only their two cameras.)

While they wait, the junkies, who are sick and in need of dope, argue, joke, taunt the director and try to eat in an attempt to take their minds off their lack of drugs. At the director's instigation they begin to talk about themselves, often lying but constantly revealing their true natures.

In spite of "naturalistic" setting and documentary style of photography, **The Connection** is extremely theatrical. Each character is given a set piece in which he is interviewed by the director and responds with a long speech about himself (often given directly into the camera). The four musicians have no long monologues: their set pieces are musical numbers — the most undiluted hard bop I've ever heard in a film.

The one character without a set piece is J.J. Burden, the Negro cameraman (played by Roscoe Browne). Burden is himself an ex-junkie who now finds himself in a no-man's land between the addicts and the director. He tries to remain detached from what is happening, almost as objective an observer as is his camera. When the director begins experimenting with dope, Burden is left to finish the film alone.

The Connection's chief weakness is the character of Jim Dunn, the documentary film director. William Redfield is completely unconvincing in the role but the fault seems to lie more with Gelber's writing than with Redfield's performance. Even as a symbol of middle class society, Dunn is unbelievable: nobody could be that naive.

Redfield's performance, however, is the only one in the film which I found unconvincing. The rest of the actors (particularly Warren Finnerty as Leach) made the characters they played — and the film as a whole — frighteningly real.

Hopefully **The Connection** will be a financial success and we won't have to wait another 6 years before **The Cool World** gets distribution in this country.

Joe Medjuck

FUNERAL IN BERLIN

Produced by Charles Kasher. Director: Guy Hamilton. Screenplay: Evan Jones (based on the novel by Len Deighton). Camera: Otto Heller. Editor: John Bloom. Music: Conrad Elfers. Cast: Michael Caine, Paul Hubschmid, Oscar Homolka, Eva Renzi. Distributor: Paramount Pictures.

In **Funeral In Berlin** Harry Palmer, the secret agent of **The Ipcress File**, returns again as the anti-Bond man, the cockney who is intelligent but lacks the old-school tie. Once again, he is played by Michael Caine, and it is only because of Caine that the film holds interest. The story itself is slight, confusing and, in the end, somewhat empty. On the surface it appears to concern a wily Russian general (played with typical good humour by Oscar Homolka) who wants to defect from East Germany to England. But this is only a ruse on his part to capture a West German

who has been master-minding escapes from the East to the West. Also involved is a woman secret agent who works for the Israelis and is after an ex-Nazi.

Filmed in Berlin by director Guy Hamilton, the picture makes an interesting companion piece to **The Quiller Memorandum**, which was filmed there at the same time. Michael Caine plays Harry Palmer with a deceptive ease; it's difficult to describe what he does, but he's always interesting to watch. As long as he's on the screen, the picture holds interest if not conviction. The color is good, the direction is sensible — too sensible in fact, and one can see now how wise Sidney Furie was to use the camera so imaginatively and in such a lively way in **The Ipcress File** — to obscure the weakness of the plot. Len Deighton, although highly-acclaimed for his stories, is slight and ordinary compared to John Le Carre, and this is evident on the screen.

Gerald Pratley

LES AMOUREUX

Un film de Mai Zetterling. Scénario et dialogues: Mai Zetterling et David Hughes, d'après le roman d'Agnès von Krusenstjerna "Les demoiselles Von Pahlen". Avec Harriet Andersson, Gunnel Lindblom, Gio Petre, Eva Dahlbeck, Anita Bjork et Gunnar Bjornstrand.

Film important et attachant que celui-ci.

Fondamentalement parce que c'est une femme qui l'a fait.

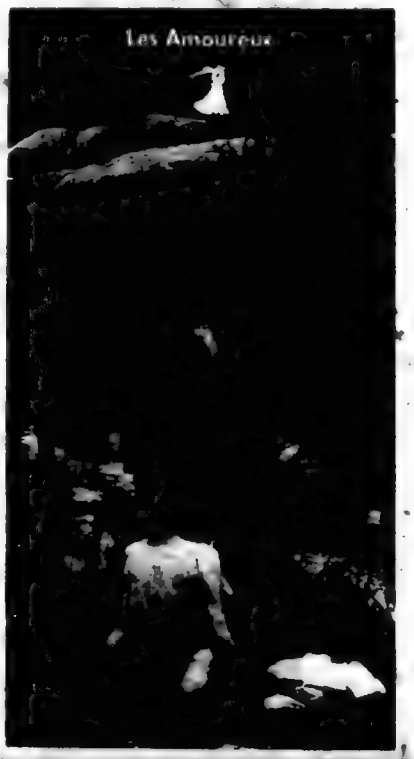
Une femme qui fait du cinéma pour découvrir et communiquer ce qu'est la femme, quand c'est elle qui fait l'investigation et trouve les **signes** pour dire le résultat de l'enquête. (Après **Les Amoureux**, ce sera **Jeux de Nuit**.) Qu'Antonioni, Bergman, Resnais, Mankiewicz, Mizoguchi, surtout Godard aient dite admirablement la femme, certes! Mais du seul point de vue de l'homme. Il y a là une faille, et une injustice. (Faut-il parler du mépris de tant d'hommes pour les femmes qu'ils prétendent aimer, alors que ce méprisable mépris dont ils se protègent nie l'amour? Je ne sais d'amour qu'avec ce respect inhérent à la connaissance, qu'avec l'estime qu'on a des qu'on s'expose pour qui s'expose avec soi.) D'où la nécessité première de l'entreprise de Mai Zetterling.

Son film est une tentative de définition de la femme.

Trois dominantes — et c'est déjà dire une valeur de l'oeuvre. L'amour, tel que le pense, le voit et le fait la femme. La condition sociale de la femme — dont, comme toute activité humaine, dépend l'amour qu'elle fait. C'est la femme qui "donne la vie".

Trois femmes attendent d'enfanter dans une clinique. Elles se remémorent chacune des fragments-charnières, des moments-moteurs, de leur vie, Enfance, et traumatismes, en fonction desquels ensuite se mettre en situation dans la vie quotidienne, dans le monde réel. Premier contact amoureux, ou para-amoureux, mais celui-ci prévenant assez. Situation de la femme dans la société, une société fondée sur la disparité de la classe possédante et la classe à son service, une société de l'homme, au sein de laquelle la femme est reléguée à l'état d'objet de plaisir, au rôle d'instrument de procréation. Cette nuit de la Saint-Jean 1914 — on annonce la guerre, on "voit" pourquoi il faut qu'elle éclate.

Nuit de toutes les licences permises, au cours de laquelle les trois femmes aiment, et sont mises enceintes. Dans la même propriété. Leurs histoires se recoupent. Et c'est l'un des mérites essentiels de Mai Zetterling que d'avoir su faire s'interférer, se répondre, s'inter-agir les trois histoires, les trois dominantes, les trois présents et les flash-backs "expliquant" les trois femmes. La jeune écervelée qui veut qu'une étreinte comprenne un profit, quand bien même elle prend à l'étreinte un plaisir fou(fou). La servante aigrie au point de refuser méchamment tout, jusqu'à un amour simple et généreux, et qui ne peut pas ne pas mettre au monde un enfant mort-né. La jeune orpheline de la classe aisée, qui parvient progressivement à réfléchir assez à



impulsions, désirs et expériences, pour qu'elle puisse accepter ce qu'elle vit, sans illusions, sans la moindre amertume. (Préfiguration d'une femme moderne alors en gestation, qui n'est pas sans faire songer à la magistrale **Gertrud** de Dreyer.)

Il fallait être une femme pour montrer l'émoi, l'excitation des jeunes pensionnaires, et l'effroi, la constipation de leurs vieilles filles directrices, au moment du coit de deux chiens. Il fallait être une femme pour montrer des filles nues aussi belles, libres, **naturelles**.

Il fallait être une femme pour "donner à voir" à ce point d'intensité juste l'envie, la crainte, l'angoisse, l'horreur de la maternité.

Dernier plan. Un bébé sort du vagin d'une femme. Le plan est gelé. Le cadre se rétrécit lentement, jusqu'à ne plus cerner que le petit corps, sur un écran noir. Vous. Moi. A chacun de savoir, alors, ayant vu comment il est né, toute la genèse qui le précède, quelle vie vivre. . .

Patrick Straram

CHELSEA GIRLS

A film by Andy Warhol.

. . . in the theatre it's plush, non-arty, the seats slide back and forth, the lights are too dim, the walls too bare, suddenly on the upper right side of the screen a blonde girl appears bathed in white with a husband who doesn't look more than seventeen, the dialogue is inaudible, the girl cuts her bangs while a child plays with her foot, the camera examines every part of her face, there are no contrasts, occasionally the picture fades out completely, a scene begins to appear on the left side of the screen, I don't know which one to watch, my eyes flick from left to right, the left side is silent but the characters seem to be talking, the right side is wiped out, the left scene is dark, the actors are arguing, there are two couches put together in the shape of female genitals, the man is a drug addict who pretends to be a father confessor, the woman opposite him is a lesbian, they argue violently always clinging to the couches, the right side has faded into a scene of some men on a bed . . .

The nature of this film defies definition, it directs one to a discussion of the film as art rather than to the film as the translator of ideas into an imagined or representative reality. The main appeal of film lies in the ability of the audience to participate, to become the characters, to forget, and to be amused in a way which doesn't seem stupid. Warhol doesn't give and doesn't

* The Love Goddesses
the story of sex in the movies by canadian film-maker graeme ferguson

* Sanjuro
kurosawa's beautifully made film startling mischievous with toshiro mifune

* The Connection
shirley clarke's shocking look at drug addiction
1961 critics prize cannes

* Soon to be released
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demand anything of the viewer. The experience is purely intellectual. One is forced, because of the slowness of the action, to analyse while watching, as a result a distinct separation is created between the movie and the audience and one becomes in effect a student of the documentary.

Like Antonioni, Warhol has translated the film into a language, a highly polished though untuned prose, which turns a potentially poetic L.S.D. scene into a dry monologue, heightened occasionally by the use of coloured lights. The structure of this film (the split-screen technique) seems to be a break with traditional filming methods; it is not. The two scenes do not influence one another, in most cases there is no relation whatsoever, consequently the viewer is always looking on one side, momentarily training his eyes on the other scene but always returning to the one with the talking.

The characters in this movie do not change, there is no development, no growth, no death, just the present, everlasting and optimistic. What society would call perverse is the only reality; drugs, homosexuals and lesbians are as integral a part of the routine as going on the toilet. Sincerity and honesty in a world which is usually thought of as insincere dominates their actions. Art is fused with the activities of an existence which denies the individual and demands the total participation of its members in a continuous Dionysian purge. Warhol has reshaped and redefined the film; since nothing is of consequence why bother with results?

This apparent vacuum is extended towards an inventory of the "vacuum", which is like grasping something infinite (the unconscious coming to the surface) but in explaining it, each shot drifts off in the same manner in which it started. It is this overt nebulousness which makes the film practically stream of consciousness. Warhol has pushed the cinema into a new sphere not dominated or limited by a concept of art but totally free, a form of improvisation far above the pretentious nature of the "didactic" or so-called "revealing" works characteristic of the present day film. Godard creates fantasy by mixing unrelated events; he denies reality by not caring for the temporal or the logical. Warhol asserts above all else that what he is describing is real, not absurd or fantasy. We are left with a product, much like "pop" art, which has restructured our reality and has created something else.

Ron Burnett

design...
DISTINGUISHED

It's the "Boulevardier" . . . designed with a flair to enhance the well-groomed look. Paris crafts it of genuine Deerskin, table-cut and hand-sewn for second skin comfort.

Paris GLOVE

Mark Blandford

Let's talk about SHORTS

There is a very fine line between unpleasant irony and affectionate teasing, an invisible but nonetheless clear border between acceptable humour and satire offensive to its recipient. **Helicopter Canada** (a 50-minute NFB featurette filmed entirely from a helicopter) had to respect that line. Produced for the Centennial Commission, the film was bound to show due respect for Canada; yet being a travelogue, it also had to find some way of avoiding the corn field which travelogues always find themselves tramping through. And if it's relatively easy to do some beautiful shooting and to come up with a comparatively novel look at Canada without turning up more than the odd cliché, walking the kind of tight-rope I have just described is very difficult indeed. It is for succeeding practically all the way that film-maker Eugene Boyko and writers Donald Brittain (of course) and Derek May deserve the Oscar the film has been nominated for.

The artistry can be seen most clearly in transitions between one scene and the next; a presentation of about a hundred little vignettes of Canadian life and geography needs considerable skill if it is going to avoid becoming a list. The film skirts the traditional descriptions of spring, for instance, (melting of snows and burgeoning of those eternal, hopelessly-boring flowers) by defining it, in Canada, as the season of the oil rush and income tax forms. Oil? "It has come a long way since the first prospectors mixed molasses and kerosene and fed it to the Indians, telling them that if they ever tasted anything like it, to be sure and let 'em know." The Manicouagan? Shot of a red car speeding toward the dam. Voice over: it contains a Hydro-Québec press agent thinking of adjectives to describe the project in his next news release. (Dissolve to the dam itself.)

I stress the commentary because it is the easiest way to convey the tone of the film. But Boyko did manage to see the country with new eyes, either because he avoided the beaten track, or because his glimpses of Toronto or Montreal were shot in the light of a gentle humour which sometimes verged on the tenderness that is born of familiar things revisited and considered from a different perspective. The only time we are fed clichés is when West Coast life is being examined — but then that is probably unavoidable. The myth of the Golden West dies hard, and it is fun to perpetrate. But Boyko indulges himself for only about four minutes, which is the basic allowance every film-maker should be granted when he first trains his lens on the West.

The rest, from Rockies to mining (which, the film reveals for the first time, is really a screamingly funny activity), from Vigneault to Parliament (where MP's come "to keep warm with heavy debate"), and the perilous chase after an eagle in the Bad Lands, is glorious. There are concrete reasons for one's secret affection for this country after all; I refer, of course, to the healthy encouragement of seeing a really good Canadian film.

Duly noted

The Quiet Racket, from **The Railrodder**'s Gerald Potterton, is another look at modern, urban man's harassed search for peace. The film's suggestion is that he carries the chaos and noise with him, and that, when he fails to find tranquillity, his punishment thus fits the crime; and, furthermore, that he is totally unable to cope with anything but the city anyway. Aside from stating these observations in relatively amusing terms, this NFB film, which wants to be a comedy, isn't really funny. Potterton, who created the brilliant Centennial TV clips, seems not to have yet acquired the wind to be amusing for any length of time.

Once Upon a Prime Time, directed by Bernard Devlin for the NFB, does succeed in being funny as it imagines the take-over of a household of TV addicts by the people whose company they crave night after night: Frankenstein, TV doctors, Mr. Fixit, the lone cowboy, etc. The only member of the family to notice this household coup d'état is the neglected housewife, who finally makes off with the lone cowboy. What happens before that is effective satire, less on the addicts than on the dope.

The science of interplanetary observation is brought to a fine art in the National Film Board of Mars' **What on Earth**, an account of their latest insights into life on Earth. They mistake cars for people, and the result is a delightful cartoon, brilliantly executed by animators Kaj Pindal and Les Drew.

FEED BACK

I sympathize with promoters of new mags, but is that any excuse to run such trivialities as the McLuhan interview? **(Take One, Vol. I, No. 2)** Granted, he's a name, and good for your cover; but the tone of the piece is set when he says that only a couple of minutes of any sort of film, and he's had it! A true cinema buff, in other words. And his ignorance of the medium comes through when he says that colour cinema "means far more stress on erotic themes". Like *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and *Lawrence of Arabia,* I suppose, both outstanding as colour films — and both containing virtually no sex. But in McLuhan's case, there is probably no end of erotic significance in a palm tree or a sand dune.

From there on in, he is merely theorizing — no one does it better — and, incidentally, showing how superficial is his appreciation of cinema. There is all the difference in the world between one who enjoys and appreciates film, and one who can theorize and analyse it to death — without enjoying it at all.

H. Francis,
London, Ontario

I would like to take issue with several points in Mr. Comor's article in your February edition. Once again the U.S. is blamed for Canadian complacency and mismanagement.

Mr. Comor's opinions of American war dramas and situation comedies are worthy of agreement and praise. We know little about Canada, however, not because of American T.V., as he suggests, but rather because we are not taught much about Canada in school, where we should be. Furthermore, we have not been "raped"; we invited seduction and, although we loved it, we felt guilty and we complained — and we still do.

Here are several examples of mismanagement. Replacing "Seven Days" by "Sunday" needs no further comment. The original and informative "Extension" series on Soviet Russia was not scheduled for the large audience it deserves, but for Sunday at 9 A.M., when most people are in church or in bed. The same applies to "Shoestring Theatre" which was moved from Sunday at 11.30 P.M. to Tuesday at 11.30 P.M. Thanks a lot. One would think that theatre-lovers have no jobs to go to the next morning. And what was wrong with Earl Cameron and the Final News?

There is no influence of American T.V. in any of the above examples, of which there are many more. They are, rather, the results of decisions made by people with "an intelligence level of twelve years of age."

Harvey Schneider,
Montreal

1—Dear Sir,
2—I like your magazine. I am delighted to see that Robert Fulford describes it as the liveliest in Canada.
3—But you must impress on your proof-readers that, if they keep jamming up the order of some of your writers' paragraphs, that liveliness will soon be due only to incoherence.
4—I DARE YOU TO (MIS) PRINT THIS LETTER.
5—Yours sincerely,
6— **Mark Blandford**
7—P.S. The paragraphs are numbered for the convenience of your proof-readers.

We regret any embarrassment caused Mr. Blandford by our clumsy juggling of the paragraphs in his review in our last issue. — **Ed.**

Lettre de Montréal

par Patrick Straram

DES SIGNES

Après la vision d'une première version, je suis impatient de revoir **Chantal: En Vrac.**

Chantal: En Vrac. Un film de Jacques Leduc. Images: Thomas Vamos. Musique: Lee Gagnon (le très talentueux et acharné chef d'orchestre d'une grande formation jazz au style mi Quincy Jones mi Dizzy Gillespie, maintenant installé avec un quartette dans sa "boîte", à la formule intéressante disques à la mode et jazz "live" en alternance, la Jazzthèque, rue Guy, près Ste-Catherine). Avec Chantal Renaud et Robert Barbaud. Une production O.N.F. 50 minutes.

Film qui désoriente. Qui accroche.

Une fille, dans la vie quotidienne. Cinéma d'auteur, en direct, à l'intérieur d'un canevas pré-établi.

Un film sur **la difficulté à dire.** La fille et un garçon ont un mal terrible à se parler, à communiquer. L'auteur procède beaucoup par analogies, par métaphores. Ni intrigue, ni thèse. Des **collages,** pour mieux souligner, mieux **signaler** les véritables problèmes au Québec aujourd'hui, ceux de l'éducation, du besoin d'une sémantique, du manque d'une culture qui fournisse les outil nécessaires pour **s'exprimer.** C'es un film sur les barrières dressée

entre les individus. On n'est pas si loin de Skolimowski.

Un film d'hommages au cinéma, aussi — ce qui élargit encore la notion de collages que je dis. Outre tel plan qui rappelle Antonioni, tel autre Hawks, il y a un plan prémédité, réplique de celui de **Pierrot le Fou** dans lequel Marianne "sait pas quoi faire", et une séquence directement consacrée au cinéma canadien français, celui de Gilles Groulx, de Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, de Jean-Claude Labrecque . . .

Film curieux, qui atteint par effraction. Film que je crois je vais beaucoup aimer . . .

UN CINEMA DE PERCEPTION

Enfin!

Gilles Groulx tourne.

Gilles va faire pour l'O.N.F. un film sur la chanson (dont on sait la vitalité et le retentissement au Québec, qu'on pense aux compositeurs-interprètes Gilles Vigneault, Raymond Lévesque, Félix Leclerc, Clémence-la-magnifique-Des Rochers, Jean-Pierre Ferland, Jean-Paul Filion, et combien d'autres, sans parler d'un certain gars de St-Germain et du côté de la Manic, qu'on pense aux interprètes Pauline Julien, Monique Leyrac, Louise Forestier . . .). Ce sera un film d'une heure. Ou plus. **Chant Premier.** En dois-je conclure que le G.-cinéma-G. (il y a le G.-cantouque-G., l'écrivain Gérald Godin) ait en tête et au coeur d'entreprendre sur pellicule "Les Chants de Mal(Dor)or"?

Ce qui intéresse Groulx, c'est de découvrir ce qu'il peut dire de ce que la chanson évoque et provoque. Est-il encore possible, au cinéma, de parvenir à d'autres données, quand c'est d'un témoignage déjà qu'il s'agit? La chanson a trouvé ce qui de la réalité est "chantable", les cinéastes cherchent encore ce qui est "photographiable". La chanson est populaire (pour de multiples raisons et circonstances sociologico-économiques). Au point qu'on puisse se demander si les Québécois ne vont pas oublier le cinéma pour les chansonniers. Pas de réponse possible autrement qu'en filmant.

Pour Groulx: "Toute idée de film m'apparaît maintenant comme un jugement de la raison à partir de notre perception du réel en mouvement. Voilà, ça dit tout. Mais ce n'est pas clair. Disons plutôt qu'une sensation que l'on a devient une perception de l'esprit, dont juge notre intelligence. Une phénoménologie de l'Idée. L'Idée, donc, est ce dont on fait les films, du moins ceux que nous aimons, que nous tenons pour les vrais."

On comprend qu'il n'y aura dans **Chant Premier** ni succession de tours de chant, ni documentaire sur la chanson, ni aucune espèce d'anecdote. Il y aura **un film.** L'Idée chanson.

Un homme. Un camarade. Une fille. Evoluant à travers une société de consommation. La chanson procède de la société de consommation et l'aggrave, ou s'insurge contre. Au moyen de la chanson, on vend denrées et idées. On écoule des produits de consommation inutiles à travers une chanson, faite sienne par un consommateur déjà aliéné sous prétexte de "Loisirs". Ou l'on dénonce le scandale de cette société de consommation et des "loisirs organisés", au moyen d'une chanson de revendication, à hauteur d'homme et d'un pays crié pour ce qu'il est. Comme le fait Georges Dor. Dor, ce trouvère militant du Québec, le chantre d'un réel et d'un devenir, "diseur" d'une dépossession et d'une identification, au seul Gaston Miron le poète Magnifique semblable, un véritable Boris Vian-Bob Dylan spécifique du/au Québec. Georges Dor, personnage autour duquel est entièrement bâti **Chant Premier.** Comment réagissent les personnages dans cette société de consommation, dont le but est de rendre impossible toute perception? Et c'est dire ce qu'a de profondément révolutionnaire le film que prévoit Gilles Groulx, homme d'un cinéma essentiellement de la perception.

Dialogues écrits d'avance, mais jamais appris par coeur ni répétés. Québec (mais c'est aussi le Viêt-nam, Noirs aux Etats-Unis et complot contre Kennedy, affaire Ben Barka et clubs Méditerranée en France, révolution culturelle chinoise, autogestion yougoslave, etc.).

Chant Premier, un film de Gilles Groulx. Avec Georges Dor. Et Christian Bernard (le contrebassiste du groupe "Les Hou-Lops"). Avec une très jeune fille . . . qu'on recherche activement.

Le cinéma, c'est la méditation sur le phénomène humain.

Le cinéma ne décrit pas, pas plus qu'il ne raconte sa méditation. Il s'établit par rapport à ce qu'il montre.

Le cinéma n'a pas à démontrer qu'il est objectif. Il n'a qu'à montrer son pouvoir effectif d'assumer ce qui EST.

On comprend la conscience du cinéma et l'engagement moral de Gilles Groulx, à l'hyper-sensibilité, la lucidité et le sens du film qui le placent entre Bresson et Godard.

Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle, la chanson comme la filmera Groulx: il y aura un film admirable, qui sera un document exceptionnel de recherche scientifique, comme dirait Godard, bien sûr . . . MERDE, cher G.-cinéma-G., go, man, go . . .

TORONTO LETTER

BY ALAN COLLINS

Novelist, playwright, animation artist, Jack Kuper (late of Robert Lawrence Production). is one of Toronto's most respected and experienced directors of tv commercials.

He arrived in Canada from his native Poland at the age of fifteen, took a course in commercial art and became a signpainter. After a period as an actor he transferred to the C.B.C.'s Graphics department and wrote a number of tv plays. His best known play, **Sun in My Eyes,** describes the shattering experiences of a Jewish child in German-occupied Poland. In 1961 he wrote and directed a short surrealist film, **Run!,** which was shown at the San Francisco and Venice Film Festivals. He left the C.B.C. in 1965 to work for the Goodis, Goldberg & Soren advertising agency.

Far from regarding commercials as hack-work, Kuper describes them as "the most significant art form of our times". His own meticulously constructed and detailed productions for Hush Puppies, Borg fabrics, Labatts, Molson and Noxzema bear this out. Currently he is experimenting with improvised commercials. For Vitapoint Shampoo he prerecorded an improvised dialogue between two members of the Second City Company and filmed images of hands and products to fit the dialogue.

On the Art of the Commercial, Kuper says "A tv commercial should be a moving poster. The idea is all important. No amount of elaborate camerawork, optical effects or superimposures can cover up a weak idea. A good commercial unfolds

like a classical drama in miniature: it has a beginning, a development, a climax and a denouement. Colour, when it is used, should highlight the subject matter, not be applied in a haphazard Mickey Mouse fashion as it is in most commercials. Coloured backgrounds merely distract from the product. To raise the standard of commercials, agencies should be more discriminating in their choice of storyboards; they should utilize talent from many different fields — photography, graphics; major artists should be approached to design ads, and the film director should be brought in at a much earlier stage."

New to the Toronto scene is Halewyn Film Productions, recently formed to produce **A Poem for Christine** (90 min., B & W, 35mm). The tale of two emotionally-disturbed adolescents is to begin shooting in late June. (Casting and hiring of production crew are still in progress, and ACTRA or IATSE-members can apply to Halewyn at Box 156, Station Q, Toronto 7.)

Future plans include a 16mm documentary on Karate, and a film version (colour) of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, as translated and adapted for the stage by Toronto producer Jan Steen. Halewyn's Ian A. Stuart invites enquiries from anyone interested in any aspect of these films, as well as from those with story suggestions of their own.

KINEO

BY PETER MORRIS

Those of you who may have been wondering whatever happened to **The War Game** (that film on the aftermath of nuclear war) will be interested to know that Canadians will probably have the chance to see this film. The British Film Institute which acquired world-wide distribution rights to **The War Game** after the BBC refused to show it on television, is now negotiating with a Canadian distributor for release of the film to theatres, film societies and other groups. Chances are that the film will be shown first in Canadian movie houses, with strict control over advertising to prevent undue exploitation of the theme, and will also be available to appropriate non-commercial groups. An announcement about the release of the film will probably be made quite soon.

The War Game, not surprisingly, was a runaway success when it was shown in British theatres and it is now being released to theatres in the U.S. with the same expectations.

The Twelve Best Comedy Films

Most critics claim that any attempt to draw up a definitive list of "Best Films" is futile: even if all critics had seen every possible contender, how can one possibly draw up a list of works of art in order of merit? Further, any attempt to make the selection more valid by adding together the votes of critics around the world merely compounds the initial error. Of course, it's fallacious to assume that a vote of critics and film historians will produce a profound result that can be writ large in film history books of the future. But a poll of critics can suggest trends of critical opinion and critical attitudes around the world and, at worst, it's a fascinating game that allows critics to display their egocentricities. The poll for The Best Films of All Time conducted by **Sight and Sound** in 1962, ten years after the first poll, suggested that some very real changes in critical attitudes had occurred in that time.

The recent poll of critics in 40 countries to select the Twelve Best Comedy Films of All Time, conducted by the Canadian Film Archives for the Centennial Commission, is also suggestive of current attitudes to the comedy film and the achievements of past and present film comedians.

Some of the results (see box) are hardly surprising: four of Chaplin's films are included, with **The Gold Rush** heading the list. In fact, since **The Gold Rush** had been included in the Best Films of All Time list, it was perhaps to be expected that it would top a list of comedy films. One wonders a little whether critics perhaps voted partly on Chaplin's reputation rather than on a comparative judgement of his films with others.

The inclusion of Buster Keaton's **The General** is perhaps indicative of the fact that this is now the most widely seen of all his films. How many critics have recently seen **Steamboat Bill Jr.** or **Seven Chances**? Those who have feel strongly that Keaton displayed a more highly developed sense of comedy in these films.

The inclusion of **Duck Soup** and **Night at the Opera** agrees with every major critical assessment of the work

of the Marx Brothers. **Duck Soup** was without doubt, their finest flowering and a sure indication that even comic geniuses need the guiding hand of a talented director. In the case of **Duck Soup** it was Leo McCarey aided by the brilliant writing team of Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby who, for once, were given their heads to let anarchy loose upon the world.

Perhaps the most surprising two films included are two recent films: Billy Wilder's **Some Like it Hot** and Pietro Germi's **Divorce Italian Style.** Surprising, because it is always easier to vote for something which has already stood the test of time than to anticipate something which you feel will. The fact that critics were willing to take a stand for them is a sure indication of their stature. Whether it can also be taken as an assessment of Billy Wilder's career as a comic director is another question. Certainly none of his other films comes close to the top of the list.

Frank Capra's name as director crops up throughout the list of films nominated but only **It Happened One Night** (his 1934 screwball comedy with Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert), is in the Top Twelve. One might have expected that his more well-known films like **Arsenic and Old Lace** or **Mr. Deeds Goes to Town** would have made it. While **It Happened One Night** was enormously popular on its first release, it does not seem to have been much available for re-assessment since then.

Another well-regarded comic director has no films in the Top Twelve: Preston Sturges. Almost all the films he directed are included in the list of votes, but no single film gathered enough votes to make the final listing. I would assume that each critic had his own personal Sturges favourite and that this accounts for the result. For those interested, **Palm Beach Story** heads the list of Sturges' films, with **The Great McGinty** and **Hail the Conquering Hero** close behind.

Ernst Lubitsch, too, just fails to make the top list, though **Ninotchka** and **To Be Or Not To Be** are in the list of runners-up. Also among the list of films which didn't quite make it are **Hellzapoppin** with Olson and Johnson, Jacques Feyder's **La Kermesse Heroique,** Max Linder's **The Three Must-Get-There, Big Business** with Laurel and Hardy, **The Bank Dick** with W. C. Fields and Howard Hawks' **Bringing Up Baby.**

Some popular comedians were notable by their absence from the poll: films featuring Bob Hope, Danny Kaye, Jack Benny and Joe E. Brown were listed only once; Abbott and Costello, The Three Stooges and Red Skelton received no votes at all. Enough said.

	VOTES
1—the GOLD RUSH (directed by and starring Charles Chaplin, U.S.A., 1925)	40
2—the GENERAL (directed by and starring Buster Keaton, U.S.A., 1927)	33
3—a NIGHT AT THE OPERA (Marx Brothers, directed by Sam Wood, U.S.A., 1935)	22
4—les VACANCES DE M. HULOT (directed by and starring Jacques Tati, France, 1953)	18
5—DUCK SOUP (Marx Brothers, directed by Leo McCarey, U.S.A., 1933)	17
MODERN TIMES (directed by and starring Charles Chaplin, U.S.A., 1936)	17
7—le MILLION (directed by René Clair, France, 1931)	16
KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS (directed by Robert Hamer, Britain, 1949)	16
9—un CHAPEAU DE PAILLE D'ITALIE (AN ITALIAN STRAW HAT) (directed by René Clair, France, 1927)	15
10—SAFETY LAST (Harold Lloyd, directed by Sam Taylor and Fred Newmeyer, U.S.A., 1923)	14
11—SOME LIKE IT HOT (directed by Billy Wilder, U.S.A., 1959)	13
12—DIVORZIO ALL'ITALIANA (DIVORCE ITALIAN STYLE) (directed by Pietro Germi, Italy, 1961)	10
MONSIEUR VERDOUX (directed by and starring Charles Chaplin, U.S.A., 1947)	10
CITY LIGHTS (directed by and starring Charles Chaplin, U.S.A., 1931)	10
IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT (directed by Frank Capra, U.S.A., 1934)	10

CLIVE DENTON ON FILM

When I wrote about **A Man for All Seasons** in my previous column, I had just been to a preview screening at which the Toronto movie trade was, confidentially, crying woe on its head at the box office. I thought it would be a friendly gesture to help a worthwhile picture on its path. Since then, of course, Zinnemann's film has won all sorts of awards and kind words galore and is apparently doing quite well with ticket sales. So much for charity! Not that a film's commercial situation alters one's opinion of its merits. (Or if it does, one is in serious critical trouble.) What the box office angle may do is determine the tone and emphasis of a review. Before, my advice in essence was "go to see it". Now, I suppose it should be — "O.K. so you're going; enjoy the film, but don't expect any miracles."

I promised, anyway, to explain how it had been possible to review **A Man for All Seasons** at some length without even mentioning the director, Fred Zinnemann. To be truthful, it was very easily possible because I did it on purpose. This later article was already on my mind. That, however, is only half the truth. Zinnemann has, artistically, a modest and retiring personality. He doesn't seem to believe that "art is beholden to the artist" but rather that the artist serves life. Serves it with humility. A distinct, recognizable "Zinnemann touch" is the last thing to expect from any film of his. He retires behind the tactful cover of meticulous research and he takes on, with **sympathica,** the garb of his protagonists. The remarkable quality of his best pictures is that they represent the **psyches** of whole groups of people. **From Here to Eternity** might have been made by a soldier, **The Sundowners** by an Aussie, **The Nun's Story** (and I don't mean to be facetious) by a nun. In fact, you might

think that **From Here to Eternity**, Zinnemann's richest and most rewarding film, **must** have been made by a soldier. Its understanding of military loyalties and frustrations, of army **ennui** and energy alike, is both alert and acute. About their earlier film together (**The Search**) somebody asked Zinnemann where he had found an "ordinary soldier" — i.e. Montgomery Clift — who could act so naturally. The inadvertent compliment to Clift applies equally to his director.

A Man for All Seasons doesn't compare with Zinnemann's earlier major films. (Is his best work behind him, then? If there is sad cause to expect so, the expectation also applies to most other veterans of Hollywood.) The director opts for a middle course with history and he accepts the limitations of a filmed play — as does Dreyer with **Gertrud**, apparently (and as does **The Connection**, only more so). Finally, in any case, **All Seasons** is a typical, typically intelligent, Zinnemann film, personal in the very nature of its reserve.

All this won't mean much to the fervent **auteuristes.** I'm concerned to think why it won't since I'm far from hostile to the "**auteur** theory" and have found it a fresh stimulus to thought over the past couple of years. There is, really, no single theory; too many people have been in on the act, with too many changes of mind amongst them, for that. With us, in Canada, the simplest point of reference to "the theory" must be the writing of Andrew Sarris, in "The Village Voice" and "Film Culture". Before Sarris came on the scene, you had to read French well to know about Truffaut's "**politique des auteurs**" and similar concepts of the artist's prime position in his art. Now there is "Cahiers du Cinéma" in English, to provide translations, and the growing school of New Criticism, through which French ideas filter into America. Andrew edits the magazine and he is the inspiration of the school. Not surprisingly, however, outside the circle in which his every word is taken as holy writ, what he says gets dismissed by many impatient people as so much garbage. This is altogether a pity. Sarris, as a populariser of important foreign thinking, has done us a great service. His own style is highly enjoyable and his considered attitudes deserve respect. He is also as American as a John Ford cavalry movie. (I say that in case I've given the impression he is simply a French spy. It doesn't entail slavish imitation to understand that world cinema needs a push from Paris at strategic moments.)

Film criticism is taking benefit from the resulting challenge to old, maybe creaky, ideas. We've found new names coming into our arguments — Fuller as well as Flaherty, Sirk besides Stroheim, and the "touch" of Lubitsch countered by the pratfall of Jerry Lewis. We've become more inclined to believe something which is taken for granted in the other arts but which has been generally and strangely denied to cinema; that **all** the works of a major artist are, at the very least, of interest.

But here the problems begin. Just who is a major artist, for example? If not Zinnemann, then neither Jacques Tourneur. If both, then also a bunch of others from Anthony Asquith down through the alphabet to James Whale. Or so it seems to me, for I'd be equally happy to own a print of **From Here to Eternity**, **Way of a Gaucho**, **The Way to the Stars** or **Bride of Frankenstein**. Secretly, I can envy those filmgoers who have rigid likes and dislikes among directors — idiosyncratic, prejudiced and downright kooky though their choices may be. What fun to go around slamming most of the great names of the cinema, in favour of Howard Hawks and Raoul Walsh! But this will never be me. I am stuck with a capacity for enjoying lots and lots of movies, and perhaps there isn't any good reason to be ashamed of that. Enjoying, that is, **to some extent**; films have such a built-in entertainment power that it's a rare one which can't offer at least one enjoyable element, whether in acting, dialogue, setting, music . . . The good directors who can bind these elements together into a satisfying unit are, happily, quite numerous. The great directors who really fuse everything into one form — whole and indivisible — they are rarer. Much rarer. Perhaps there have been a dozen up to now. Some of them I admire, as it were, from afar. Griffith, Dreyer, Eisenstein remain, emotionally, somewhat remote. My "pantheon", if I'm to have one, would grudge space to other than three towering figures, the trinity of my secular church, John Ford, Jean Renoir and Luis Bunuel. And I'm not sure they would want to be shut up together for long.

Zinnemann's reticent movies can mean little to the confirmed **auteuriste** because, by definition, art must be beholden to the artist. (I get that phrase, by the way, from M.G.M.'s translation of its motto, "**ars gratia artis**". Which is rather ironic, since Leo the Lion was always wary of real artists and liked everything his own way.) The primary interest of any director's pictures becomes simply this: the creation and recreation, over and over, of a constant viewpoint, a personal universe. Well, it would be madness to deny the truth of such appeal and value in art. The films of my favourites — Ford, Renoir and Bunuel — absolutely show the shoots of a whole career grown on a single stem. But there's something reversible about this argument, which doesn't (though it might seem to) deny a place to a less compulsive artist. Consider Ford's two pictures made in Ireland. **The Quiet Man** is better than **The Rising of the Moon**, on the one hand, because it has more heartfelt treasure from the storehouse of Ford's spirit and imagination. On the other hand, an equally valid reason why **The Quiet Man** is superior is that it relates more directly and richly to the everyday truths and facts of Ireland, and of human nature; things not lodged alone within the skull and breast of famed John Ford. Knowledge of Ford's work and ways makes **The Rising of the Moon** enjoyable, but you have to indulge him to make the movie succeed in that fashion.

Consider also Samuel Fuller, an outstanding film-maker, notable both for narrative skill and for a rough-and-ready but potent streak of the moralist within him. Fuller has been most notoriously abused by most critics, perhaps because he is not couth. People find his films hard to ignore, because they won't be contained within "B" movie stereotypes, but they resent him rampaging through the usually polite intellectual cinema like a roughneck at the cocktail party. I'm grateful to Andrew Sarris for building up Fuller and it's great to see him feted in a Godard film, no less (**Pierrot le Fou**). But then again — there's a slight snag. **The Naked Kiss**, while pleading tolerance for a repentent prostitute, implies that it's O.K. to murder somebody who molests little girls. Similarly **Shock Corridor** equivocates in its effects, particularly on an unwary audience. Fuller uses a ghastly insane asylum to set up an exciting and enquiring allegory on social relationships. Relentlessly driving home its points, the movie threatens (as Joe Medjuck remarked) to put back mental health five hundred years. Now, much can be accepted for the sake of artistic integrity. Accepted and sorted out afterwards. Don't let's be beastly to Sam Fuller. However, since Fred Zinnemann has never made a film that hasn't been marked by compassion, responsibility and friendliness, let's not throw stones at him either. There is room for both, in our theatres, if not in the newest **auteur**-mobiles.

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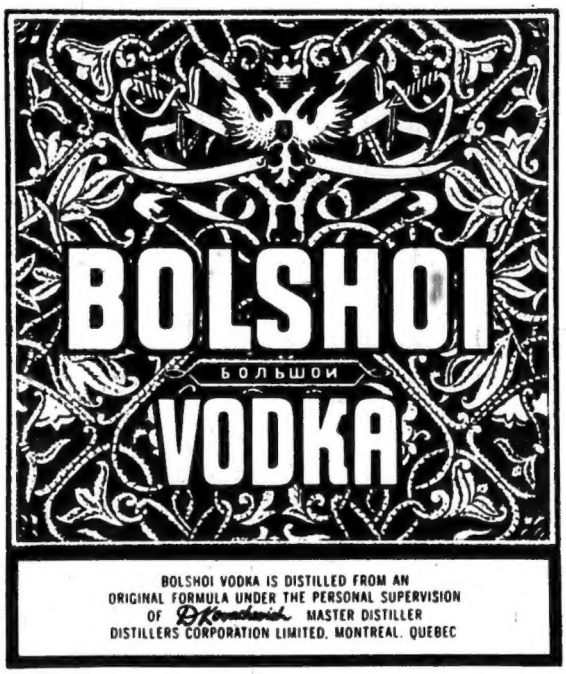
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